



CHRISTIAN FRAGMENTS;

OR

REMARKS

ON THE

NATURE, PRECEPTS, AND COMFORTS OF RELIGION

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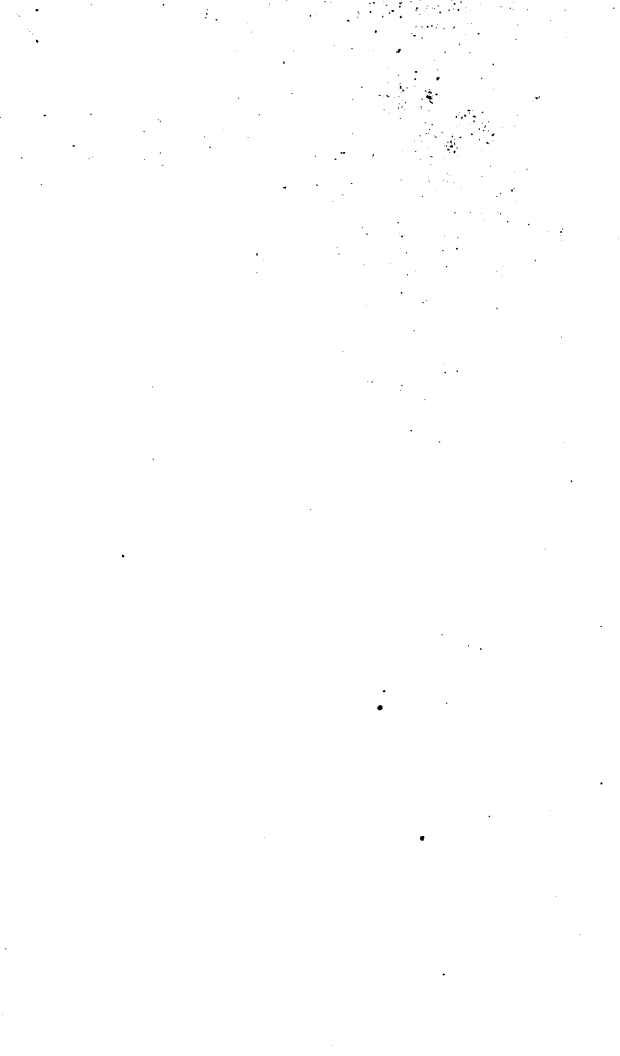
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PREFACE.

PART of this little book was written some years ago, part, more recently, under deep affliction. It is not to be taken as a systematic work, for it only professes to be a collection of Fragments, relating to the nature, precepts, and comforts of religion. The reader may, therefore, take it up, and lay it down, without breaking any train of reasoning.



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CHRISTIAN FRAGMENTS.

FRAGMENT I.—WHAT IS RELIGION?

RELIGION, is a word, which, from its derivation, evidently meant a binding of a man to a god, and implied an acknowledgment of the obligation to serve him. It had a twofold acceptation. In the first, it merely embraced the outward and actual service performed, and worship offered, and obedience yielded. In the second, it included the sentiments of devotedness, love, reverence, and fear; and which might be expressed by the terms piety or sanctity, in so far as these are understood to indicate a mere desire to please and serve the gods.

This being the meaning of the word, as a general term, it will vary in its more specific character, according to the system believed, or adopted, whether pagan or christian. Now this, which is a very plain, is nevertheless a most important consideration; for there is no quality,

practically, more misunderstood than that of religion, and no character concerning which there are more misapprehensions, than the one, in common language, called religious.

Religion, in one sense, means, in the present day, merely a system of belief; and the christian religion in this view, is a set of facts, precepts, and doctrines, relating not only to God and man; but, also to the relation which Christ bears to both; and a religious man is considered to be one who does believe the christian system, and pays respect to its ordinances and outward observances. In this respect, he is exactly on the same footing with the pagan who believed his system, and respected his gods. It is true that there is this mighty difference, that the creed of the one is true, that of the other was false; but in both, the character is that of mere belief, or apparent and outward worship. Startling as it may appear, I take the strong ground, that in many respects, the pagan had, often, the superiority over the christian, inasmuch as he really believed all that his system required, and yielded all the service and respect which it demanded. There was no requisition of a pure spirit, no provision made for a change of heart. The mind was the same whether he worshipped the sun in the firmament, or served a graven image, and, bating the difference between the objects of worship, there is on the

part of the mere nominal christian, no more true religion, than belonged to the adorer of fire. The pagan might, if his judgment were convinced, that it was better to worship fire than Jupiter, do so without the slightest change in the heart. He had merely to transfer his service from one object to another. But the christian, even if it were possible to admit the divinity of any other being than the true God, could not worship or adore that being unless holy,—for the essential change induced in the christian, is a love of holiness.

An important difference between the pagan and the true christian, consists in the standard of excellence, the estimate of holiness. The more religious that the christian is, that is, the more truly that he is a christian, the more does he admire the holiness of God, and desire to be himself holy, and the more is he opposed to all that is contrary. The worship of idols, is the true and real contra-distinction, to the worship of God. It was so in early times, in a visible way. It is so still; for the love of pleasure, the service of the world, obedience to wayward desires and sinful pursuits, are nothing else than the adoration of the things, though not of the personifications or images. He who gives to the world his time and his heart, is just as determined and true an idolater, as the delu-

ded Greek or Roman, or the Chaldean of still more ancient days.

It comes then to be a most serious consideration, that with all the semblance of religion, with a mind full of orthodox knowledge, and a conduct conformed to all the exteriors of christianity, and obedient to its regular and visible ordinances, a man may pass, through life, with the character of being religious, and, yet, be as little changed in his heart, as the proud citizen of ancient Rome, and as truly an idolater, as he who acknowledged all the gods at Athens,—for, there also, Jehovah had an altar erected to the unknown god. Deluded man ! is the God you profess to worship better known to you, or his holiness more adored and admired, or a more undivided homage and obedience yielded by you—a name can make no distinction. From the fall of Adam, there have been only two powers claiming supremacy, God and the devil; and the last, under many forms, has reared his temples, but the principle has, in every age, and under every variety, been the same, and amongst nominal christians there are many idolaters. For, although the christian religion be a pure and perfect system, and an express revelation from the only true God, yet, it by no means follows, that he who assents to its truth, and pays outward respect to its ordinations, or even pro-

fesses zeal for its precepts and doctrines, is a religious man ; and why ? just because he does not admit and feel one essential part of christianity, which distinguishes it as a more perfect revelation from all other religion, namely, the necessity of a change of heart, a holy and pure condition of the soul, a renewed condition of that mind, which, though dwelling in the body, is not confined to it, nor limited in the exercise of its powers within the frame it tenants. With the rapidity of lightning it can dart from one end of the world to another, or soar to higher spheres. It is indeed bridled by the mysterious union with its grosser companion, but, nevertheless, it holds a dominion and supremacy, and is conscious that it is both the immortal and responsible principle in man. Outward acts derive their moral importance from the spring within, and it is the power and the influence, which guide that spring, which give the character to the man.

If we ask, then, who is the religious man ? the reply is, he who has a religious mind, which desires to be similar in moral quality to God. Religion consists not in believing one point, or doing one duty, or in being purified in one part of the mind. It consists not in an orthodox creed and a decent life, necessary as these are, but it embraces the belief of all the revelation of God, the performance of all the divine will

and of every duty, in every part, and the entire and universal sanctification of the heart, of the desires, affections, and every faculty of the mind.

There might be less mistake, were we to call a religious man, a godly man, for this character is distinct and strict. He is a man like God, a man in the image of God, as Adam was, and therefore a godly man is a holy man. He is pure, and resembles God in his disposition or quality of mind. One view relates to a state of absolute holiness ; another, to the actual condition here.

In the first view, no man can be called godly, holy, or religious, who has one spot left, one unholy wish or desire, one sinful thought, one moment of forgetfulness of God, disregard to his power or command, or any enjoyment independent of him. Since the fall of Adam, Jesus, alone, has exhibited on earth to the world, the perfect character of holiness, and therefore was in this sense, the only godly man who dwelt on earth. It is in heaven alone, that this state of holiness is to be found.

In the second view, there is a progressive resemblance to God, an increasing holiness, and changing, and melioration, by the work of the Spirit.

Godliness or holiness, in this life, is different from that in heaven. There, it is perfect and

unalterable. Here, it is only in progress, and we are called on to believe God, and trust in him, as well as to love and obey him. There can be no godly man who looks on the work of redemption, otherwise, than as God looks on it, or who trusts to any hope or expectation, but that hope held out by God, and that plan of mercy declared by God, to be his plan of mercy, and the one by which he made the manifestation of his wisdom, and chose to illustrate the divine attributes. There can be no truly godly man, who, in any one thing, or any one respect, has a different view, or a different wish, from God, or who would desire that his lot, or his life, should be otherwise than it is, or be willing that one single spot of sin should remain in his soul. He must be truly and perfectly sanctified, which is not to be till he arrive in heaven.

FRAGMENT II.—SANCTIFICATION.

It is quite possible for a man to describe, to a certain extent, from reading or information, a state in which he has never been placed ; but he alone who has experienced it, can give feeling, and minute distinctness to the account. In this way, we may, to a limited degree, describe sanctification, but he alone can truly comprehend, and consequently truly tell what it is, who has been fully sanctified. We must then go to heaven for a true description, for it is there only that it can be experienced, and consequently conceived. The infinite holiness of God cannot there be comprehended, but assuredly it is better conceived there than here, and the extent of sanctification or holiness, which may be possessed by a finite creature, is there, and there alone, to be understood and experienced.

Sanctification is a state of holiness, a condition of the soul, which must, when perfect, regulate and characterise all the desires and operations of the mind. There must be a perfect love, and admiration, of the quality of purity, belonging to God, and a revolting from every thing which has the slightest stain.

There must be an ardent love of purity and perfection, on the one hand, and of God as the very essence of holiness and perfection ; whilst, on the other, there must be an instinctive repugnance to every thing which God hates, a recoil from every thing disapproved of by God, a hatred of sin as a condition which could not be tolerated or endured for a moment, and which would be felt to be the greatest of all evils, the most dreadful of all calamities. There must be an unalloyed, an entire and cordial rejoicing, in the whole of the divine will and pleasure ; an immediate, perpetual, and ardent desire to do all that God requires ; a delight and joy in contemplating the glory, and goodness, and holiness of God, and in doing all that he sees right ; a fervent wish to be for ever blessed with his favour ; an impossibility of ever conceiving, far less indulging, the purpose of, in any respect or degree, having a different desire from God's desire, or, of doing what God does not approve of being done. There is a full and universal acquiescence in the whole of God's appointment, as being the best appointment, and an inability to believe, that any one thing, or any one condition, or any one act, can be desired or tolerated, which is not in perfect accordance with the holy will of God. There is not only a conformity to the whole will of God, and the character of God,

but one entire and full devotedness to him, one uninterrupted feeling of the utter, and absolute, impossibility of happiness in any other state ; a feeling, that it would be the greatest of all miseries, to be able to conceive or imagine, that the slightest desire could ever arise, that any thing different from the will of God, considered in all and every part, could be entertained.

But how does this mighty change, from the former, take place? By the mind being able now to discern the truth, to know the truth, and to live by the truth. By the soul being made holy, and consequently not only able to relish holiness, but unable to relish any thing which is not holy. Now, here is the contrast between the state in heaven, where there is full sanctification, and the state on earth, where there is only partial sanctification. Man, in his natural state, so far from recoiling from sin, as the greatest evil, and rejoicing in the holiness of God, as the greatest good, does quite the reverse. He loves sin and recoils from God, and, when he is changed by grace, and the work of sanctification is begun, he experiences, still, a struggle between the old, or natural, state, and the renewed or sanctified state. There is no full, entire, and cordial repulsion of sin, no acute and instinctive dislike to it, no glowing and undivided love to God, no never-fading, never-changing ardour to be near him,

to look upon him, to commune with him, to love him, to do his will here as it is done in heaven. Alas! the love is cold, the holiness most imperfect, the power of sin, and of the world, most marked. In place of sin being instinctively, and essentially, and entirely hated, he feels a bias toward it, a repugnance to holiness, a strife and a struggle to refrain from sin, and give his heart, and his soul, and his life to God.

FRAGMENT III.—TRUE EXTENT OF THE HOLINESS
REQUIRED BY GOD.

IT is only the most obstinate ignorance and inconsideration, which can permit any man, to form a low estimate, of the holiness required by God. If man be permitted to form his own standard and maximum of holiness, if he be at liberty to regulate his own degree of obedience, to select just such requisitions from the general law of the Almighty, as suit his own opinions and wishes, if he take any rule, but the written and revealed word, if he may choose out such portions of duty, and such degrees of performance, such a modicum of respect, veneration, and affection as he pleases to bestow, such an amalgamation of heaven and earth, of the service of God, and the love of the world, as accords with his own convenience, then, is it easy to be a christian, and then are the character and essences of a christian, to vary with the conceit and waywardness of men, and instead of being of one uniform standard and quality, they must be as changeable as the disposition and caprice of a fallen creature. But such is *not* the case. There is a fixed, unalterable,

characteristic given by the God of truth and of holiness, which can in no one respect be affected by our judgment. The root of the error is, that man forms an estimate suited to his fallen and sinful state. He forms it, not from the word of God, but from his own imagination. He takes not up the strict law, he denies the claim to the undivided heart, the whole heart and soul. He has created a phantom, which he follows, till it lead him to destruction. The christian character is nothing short of the character of Christ. The same mind which was in Christ, must be in his followers. There can be no evading this proposition, for it is put forth by God. There is no possibility of mistaking it, unless, by that inattention and disbelief which proceed from the insensibility, the presumption, the vanity of the fallen mind. God never has changed, and never can change his character, and it is by this character, that we must judge of what beings can be acceptable to him. His attributes must regulate the standard of perfection. A low estimate of christianity, can only be formed by men who are not christians, and in proportion to the extent of christian grace, will be the height of the estimate of the christian character. Can any man gravely maintain, that he may with truth, claim the character of a christian, if he do not serve God, even, with that

strictness which his fallen nature could permit? Is he justified in saying, that it is mere puritanism, to serve God so strictly as some do, that he may with impunity neglect his ordinances, lightly esteem his sabbath, and give the best of his days, and the most, if not the whole of his heart to the world? No, if the love of God really rule in any heart, that heart will find that it is impossible to love God enough, to obey and honour him with an homage too strict and undivided. Ask the professing christian what he thinks of Christ, and this, at once, will touch a spring, which ought to open up his true condition to his view. Does he desire to esteem the work of Christ, as God the Father esteems it, or, does he think that the Father really loves the Son, and magnifies his work too much? That mind must be infinite, which can comprehend the thoughts of the Godhead, but, that mind which has the most exalted and vivid conception, of the divine estimation of the work of Christ, has risen highest in sanctified intelligence, and comes nearest to the truth. Moses and Elias, after their complete sanctification in heaven, did once visit the earth, and what was the object of their visit, and the subject of their discourse? Not the pomp and the grandeur of the Jewish nation, not any of the glory of this world, but the decrease which Jesus should accomplish beyond

the walls of Jerusalem. Is the redeeming work of Christ, beheld with delight by the Father, does the Holy Spirit rejoice in the sanctification of a reclaimed heart, and, willingly, put forth his grace and his influence, in favour of the most profligate and ungrateful of the rebels against God. Does the Redeemer himself see of the travail of his own soul, and be satisfied with the reward of his sufferings. Is his own blessed work, the joy of the Son of God? is that the theme of the whole host of glorified souls in heaven, and yet shall man, on earth, laugh it to scorn, turn from it with indifference, push it from him as a troublesome intruder, and prefer any thing, and every thing, to the consideration of that, which, in the bright and happy mansions, where God reveals himself to the spirits of the just made perfect, is continually praised with a joy and adoration which holy creatures alone can feel and offer.

Ah! little does even the true worshipper on earth, know and feel the magnitude and value of Christ's work, and darkly indeed does he see its glory and excellence. Were he permitted, suddenly, to behold the splendour of the upper sanctuary, and mingle with that multitude which no man can number, standing before the throne with their golden harps, singing hallelujah to the Lamb, how would he shrink back and humble himself, on account of the feeble-

ness of his praise, and the comparatively icy coldness of his love. Not one thought of his own power and his own ability to approach the throne, either in supplication, or with praise, would be found in his heart. No longer would there be any lurking confidence in the fervency of his own supplication, or any self-complacency in offering his homage. But with a heart subdued by a sense of his own weakness and sinfulness, he would throw himself, in all sincerity, at the feet of the great High Priest, and through him alone, desire to offer his prayers and supplications, saying, woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips. No place would be found for the world, or a world's thoughts, but Christ would be the supreme Lord of his heart, and the sole object of his affection.

Nothing is more common than to talk of the solemnity of death, whilst we forget the greater solemnity of living ; for, death is only awful as the termination of life, and the entrance on that state which is to be decided by our course in living. Our life, truly, is more dreadful than death, and did we rightly view the value of time here, as connected with the eternal condition of an imperishable soul, not an hour could pass, forgetful of the voice, "The place thou standest on is holy ground." Death is only dreadful, when it sounds the knell of misspent

hours, when the messenger, whilst he holds up to the fading eye, the whole scroll of a life devoted to time alone, the history of a spirit bound to the world, and hitherto indifferent to both the sufferings and the entreaties of a Redeemer, touches, at the same moment, with his icy hand the fainting heart, and by the retrospect of the past, shuts out all hope for the future. When will man be wise, and *feel* as well as admit, that life is probation? When the ship strikes on the hidden rock, and suddenly disappears in the deep, is there one of all the thoughtless, perhaps mirthful crew, who does not, in that moment of destruction, hear the crash, and feel the reeling of the vessel, as he would the summons of the last trumpet to judgment, or the yawning of the opening graves? Is not the rushing in of the overwhelming element, a poor emblem of the dark billows which roll over his soul, bringing with them all the appalling realities of an immediate eternity? The truth now is felt. But is the truth of God different to-day, from what it was yesterday? Is that momentous now, which an hour ago was unworthy of consideration? Is the Almighty more holy, more just, more terrible in death, than he was in life? Is eternity more important now, than it was in the moment of indifference? Is God speaking to us more clearly and more truly than he did before? Is he tell-

ing us now, what we were not told before, that the soul is immortal, and the judgment irreversible? No, no, we have changed, not God. We now see what we formerly would not look at. We now feel, what till now, we would not permit ourselves to feel. It is in the hour of death, that the value of life can no longer be underrated. Warned of the coming storm, we would take no advice, but heedlessly go out and meet it. When struck by the bolt, we have only time, as we plunge into eternity, to feel, that we have destroyed ourselves, and rejected the counsel of Him, who, day after day, has been offering mercy, and proclaiming the value of the soul, and the certainty of a judgment final and eternal. All men know that they must die, but the evil day is put off; all, who are not infidels, believe that there is a futurity, but how few think more of the messenger who is on his way to meet them, than they do of the passing cloud, or, practically regard the direct or personal call of the Almighty, more than the sound of the wind, and yet every breath of wind that blows, tells them that death is nearer, and whether they listen to the voice of the storm, or the whispers of the gentle breeze, they may alike hear the call of God to consider their latter end, and prepare for judgment.

FRAGMENT IV.—COURSE TO ETERNITY.

WE see one running along ; is he not running to eternity to meet his God ? Is he pacing slowly ? still he is moving on to the grave. Is the child frolicsome, as the insect in the sun-beam ? he also is on his way to another world. In this life then, take it at any age, or under any circumstance, we are living for eternity. For eternity, we rise in the morning, and lie down at night. For eternity, we think and act. To eternity we are continually hastening on. Well then, indeed, may the advice be attended to, whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. This world is to be destroyed, and all who conform to it, in its maxims and principles, are involved in its destruction. Those alone are safe, who have come out of the world, who are living for heaven. I may say in heaven, for such have, even while on earth, their conversation in heaven. They feel that they are strangers here. There can be no compromise between the spirit of the world, and the spirit of the celestial city. Call it fanaticism, or enthusiasm. or madness, or the work-

ing of a weak mind. It is nevertheless true, that there neither is, nor can be any midcourse, nor any reconciliation between a worldly principle and a heavenly heart. There can be no indifference to God, and yet a participation in eternal life; an indulgence in sin, and yet the reward of righteousness; no neglect of a Saviour, and yet the blessing of salvation; no want of love to a Redeemer, and yet the sure hope of a blessed resurrection, and a full redemption; no choice of the vanities of time, and yet a reservation of the glories of eternity; no neglect of the call of the gospel, and yet an interest in the promises of the gospel; no walking with men of the world in their maxims, and habits, and sentiments, and yet a fellowship with the saints in heaven, or communion with them in their love, and their praises, and their blessedness. No worship of idols in the temple of the heart, by the incense of unholy thoughts, and yet a safe hold by that anchor of hope which entereth, within the vail, to the great high priest. No, no! there must now be made a decided choice, for there is hereafter a decided judgment. There is no voice heard, demanding how long you will halt between two opinions, but there is, on the record, a call to come out of the enemy's country, and serve God instead of Baal. There is no time allowed

for remaining, no participation of service permitted. The demand is immediate and exclusive, and whosoever does not obey, must disobey at his peril. This is not a time for half measures. The choice must soon be made, and it must be made, not from evanescent feelings and fancies, but from the firm purpose of a heart sanctified by the spirit of God. Listen as the mother describes to her child, the glories and the happiness of heaven, the peace, the joy, the unalloyed delights which are to be found in a land, where there are neither pains, nor sorrows, nor disappointments. Come mother, let us go to that happy place, why should we stay here? where is it? how do we go? Ah child! that place is not to be found on earth, and a dark and gloomy valley must be passed to reach it; perhaps a long wilderness must be journeyed through. Describe, to an older hearer, the felicity of paradise, and perhaps you fire his imagination, and like Balaam, he says, "Let me die the death of the righteous." But the imagination alone is affected, the heart is unchanged, the desire is like the passing shadow, which soon departs.

FRAGMENT V.—THE WILDERNESS OF THE WORLD.

THIS world is indeed a wilderness, through which we travel toward the celestial city. We dwell in tents daily pitched, and daily struck, but we go to a city of habitations. We are journeying to eternity, and the most thoughtless cannot deny, nor conceal from himself, that though there may be many green spots on which he is allowed to repose, yet, from these he is often forced on to the desert ; and well for him that it is so, for at last he may be brought to feel, that he is indeed in a dry parched land, and to have a longing desire to possess that better country, which, though not within his view, is yet only hid by a cloud which is soon to be dispelled. There is an unseen world which remains for ever ; for this every one is preparing, into it every one must enter, all are hastening to it, all are making themselves meet for it, and have already their citizenship there, and their fellowship with its inhabitants. Without any visible intercourse, they are living with them, and though in an unequal degree, are uniting in the same service. Inconsideration cannot

invalidate this truth. We already form a part of the spiritual world, and belong to eternity. We are on our journey, and shall soon reach the place of our destination, but we are neither independent, nor insulated, nor unconnected, for, in our march, we are accompanied by an invisible multitude, to whose rules we are submitting, and for whose perpetual company we are training, and making ready. The day is not distant, when we shall become one of them, alike unseen by those we leave behind, and, with them, continue linked by community of principle, and sameness of destination. Those who believe that man perishes as the brute, will call this a creation of the fancy; but he who believes that the spirit of man lives hereafter, and, who so far credits the word of God, as to admit, that there are two states in that hereafter, cannot conceal from himself, that into one or other of these, he, at death, must enter, and for one of these he is now preparing. It is indeed a thought as awful as it is true, that all the inhabitants of this world are educating, and making ready and meet for heaven or hell. There is not one single exception, some are more, others less, decided in their course. Some are more, others less, conscious of the class to which they belong, or desire to belong. Such a view I am aware will be ridiculed by the

thoughtless for they see not those who walk with them, and trouble themselves not about the fellowship of their unseen partners. By the infidel, it will be more than ridiculed, it will be rejected, with scorn, as a horrible fiction of the imagination, calculated to make a weak mind either mad or melancholy. Yet true it is. In the midst of life, we are walking with the spirits either of heaven or of hell; with those holy and happy angels who are ministering to the good, or with those impure fiends who are deluding and betraying the bad. Could we draw aside the curtain which hides the spiritual world, could mortal eyes behold immortal things, we should indeed find this to be no illusion of the fancy, but we should see earth filled with one innumerable multitude, formed by the souls of the living, and the spirits of other worlds, blended and united, in a common service, and hastening to a common judgment. We should see each separate soul here, linked, though unconsciously, with those who are aiding in his progress to heaven or to hell. And on this vast throng, and on each individual, God looks, and registers the thoughts of the heart. From his eye and from his knowledge, there is no escape. Go to the deepest recess, to the most secret spot, he is there; even the half formed wish of the soul is open before him. With the spirit of

man, the spirit of God is continually present. As the eagle pursues the flying bird, follows it in all its course, baffles every attempt to escape, and finally seizes on it as his prey ; so, is the human mind followed in every imagination, continually kept in the sight of the Judge, and at length, in spite of every effort, brought to the bar, where not one single desire or purpose, or action remains unknown. God will one day say, went not my spirit with thee? If the christian admit all this, and profess to walk with God, and associate with his holy creatures, how ought he to guard his heart, and restrain his evil passions and desires? Is there not a voice addressed to him, by that holy spirit which resides within him? Where dwellest thou? What dost thou? Can he answer, "Lord, come and see." He ought never to forget that he is living here for heaven, and the more that he is influenced by that consideration, the more will he find that he is already there in his desires, and in his hopes, and in his purposes. He is becoming more and more meet, by the spirit of God, for that happy place. It is no less true, that the sinner is living for the wrath of God. The evil spirit is dwelling in him, and blinding him, and whether deluded by the dream of ambition, or of infidelity, or by carelessness, or pro-

crastination, whether openly profligate, or speciously decent, one thing is certain, that if not united to Christ, and training for heaven, he must be joined to idols, and reserved for destruction.

FRAGMENT VI.—LOVE TO JESUS CHARACTERIZING
OUR STATE.

THERE are many characteristics which may enable a man, if he sincerely and honestly desire the information, to judge to what class he belongs. Amongst these, there is none more decided than love to Jesus. It is quite impossible for any one who professes to have the hope of redemption, to possess really this hope, and yet not to love him through whom it comes. It is not sufficient to be merely able to say, that, believing all the narrative of his work of mercy, contemplating the greatness of his sufferings, and persuaded of his gracious and continued intercession, he esteems the Saviour. What man, who thinks at all on the subject, can do otherwise than admit, with his judgment, the worth and value of the Redeemer, and feel that esteem, which may, and must, be given with the understanding. But all this may be done without any true christianity, any permanent influencing principle of religion, without one single day, in which it could be said of the individual, that he loved him, whom he could not

do otherwise than admire and esteem, in the simple contemplation of his character, nay, even without the abandonment of gross and continued sin. The christian not only esteems the character of Jesus, but he deeply, in his heart, reverences his work, and loves him as his best and greatest benefactor. When this love is wanting, there can be no true religion. It may be cold, it may be languid, but amidst this coldness, this languor, there is much keen regret that it should be so, and, though with much diffidence and great humility, the disciple still can say, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." By this inward consciousness of the existence of love, however damped by an evil heart, it may be known that the individual is a christian, and he cannot mistake the principle of love, for it is identified with faith and its fruits. Further, I may say with confidence, that no one can claim the character of a christian, who has not a sincere and lively desire, to know whether he be so. Could this truth be impressed on men, it would go far to unsettle the composure and indifference with which many go through a life of delusion, and be a mean of preventing that bitter disappointment, which must be met with at its termination. One reason why so many are deluded, and willingly deluded, is that they do not wish to

come to a close inquiry with themselves. They have fabricated a theory of religion, a system of security and mercy, a scheme of morals, which has not the name, far less the principle, of true holiness within it. One, quite consonant to their thoughts and habits, and sanative to their fears. There are many who go through a long course of years, banishing all strict inquiry into the correctness of their notions, or the actual safety of their souls. They shun all such investigation, it may be, because they have prejudged the question, and are determined to adhere, and trust to, what a slight and unwarrantable consideration has made them adopt, as an easy reconciliation, of God and the world. But many more shrink from the inquiry, not because they are satisfied that it is altogether needless, and that there can be no mistake, but, from some misgiving as to the solidity of their ground, and an apprehension that a faithful, and minute, investigation, might ruin the whole fabric. They proceed on the dangerous policy of keeping by what can pacify them, without seeking for arguments which might disturb their peace; or, if doubts do at any time arise, they are dismissed for the present, and handed over till a more convenient season. Now, I repeat, that no man is, or can be, a christian, who willingly rests in doubt or

uncertainty, as to the correctness of his opinion, or the state of his character. It is as impossible for him to be a christian, without a desire to be assured of this, and an anxiety to look, honestly, at the real state of his heart, as it would be for a man whose whole property was at stake, not to examine into the validity of his title deeds. Now, whoever honestly and faithfully wishes to know whether he be a christian, has, in the very outset, great encouragement, from the mere existence of the desire, and when he yields to it, one very unambiguous mark will be, the presence or absence of love to Jesus ; not cold esteem, not the admiration of a great and merciful character, but a personal feeling, a heart feeling, a feeling of love, a desire, an ardent desire, to cling close to the Redeemer, a delight in looking on him, in communing with him, a grief and distress when he is absent, and, then, a continual cry for his presence, no satisfaction without that. Then, there is a joy in the contemplation of his work, and a glorious anticipation of the time when the whole heart shall be possessed by him, whom the soul loves, and when that soul shall be able perfectly to love Christ, and have all its happiness in him. Love is the criterion of christianity, the mark of a true disciple. It may, indeed, be cold, and that is a source of

lamentation, but the principle itself is, and must be, present ; where there is no feeling of love to Jesus, there is no sure hope for eternity, no evidence of that faith which worketh by love, no proof that the blessed redemption accomplished by Christ is available to the soul.

FRAGMENT VII.—THE KINDNESS AND LOVE OF GOD.

GOD "giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry," and yet these discern not the hand which feeds them, nor know the power, and the goodness, of him who sustains them. "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," and yet men praise not "the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." The mercy, enduring love, and compassionate care of God are infinite, and in no degree affected by our perception of them, more than his power and his providence are, by the want of perception in the beasts which perish. The infant knows not the kindness and affection of his parent, until the mind advance in capacity, and the feeling and understanding be developed. Neither does the natural man comprehend the love of God, or feel love or gratitude toward him. He knows not his own danger, nor his own helplessness. He considers not the mighty power of God unto salvation, nor the greatness of the price paid for man's redemption. To know all that can be

known, by the human mind, of the love of God, and, to feel all the love toward God, which the human heart can feel, the soul must be translated to heaven, must see and feel, there, all the enormity of sin, the infinite holiness of God, the greatness of his love in giving his own Son as a Redeemer, and the inexpressible blessedness of being made holy. It must be able to form an adequate contrast between this holy and happy state, and the evil of sin, and the misery which attends it.

In order to know anything, here, of the love of God, and to feel any love toward him, that change, which is to be completed and perfected in heaven, must be begun on earth, and those who approach nearest to the heavenly state here, will love God most. In heaven, the soul not only loves God, for all the blessings bestowed, and for the rich gift of salvation, but also, and most dearly, on account of his infinite perfection. Every attribute of God is a source of joy and love to the sanctified soul, but above all, and as the centre, round which they all are placed, on account of his holiness. What a change must be produced ! Here, the soul naturally recoils from God as a holy God, and, even in its most exalted state of grace, and in the moment of highest feeling, and keenest perception, of the nature of holiness, it experiences

but little of the love and delight, which the contemplation of infinite holiness will give in heaven. It is a blessed and glorious prospect, and one as certain as it is blessed, that when the soul shall be fully sanctified, that it will cling to God as a being of purity ; it will love holiness with a most perfect, and to us on earth, inconceivable degree of joy and satisfaction. It will adore, and rejoice in, the power and goodness, and glory of God, and in all his attributes ; but holy itself, it will derive the highest portion of its delight from the holiness of God. There is no recoil there from holiness. It is the nature, now, of the redeemed soul, which feasts on the glorious contemplation, continually admiring, loving, and rejoicing, but never exhausting the source, for God is infinite. Ah ! here is something of heaven. Its inhabitants are singing hallelujah. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," is their song, and, to the Lamb, they turn with grateful hearts, ascribing to him thanksgiving and praise for his wondrous work. If this be the happiness of heaven, surely, it must be the only true felicity on earth, to love God and rejoice in his holiness. The influence of the Spirit, alone, can regenerate the soul, and enable the guilty and depraved heart of man to perceive any beauty in God, and either to know anything of his love to man, or to feel

any love toward him. Ask any one, who has thought little of the history of eternity, what he thinks of the love of God, and the reply is vague and speculative. Ask the young convert, whose heart is warm, though his advancement may be small; or ask the pilgrim who has arrived at the end of his journey, and is just ready to depart, what he thinks of the love of God to fallen man? The answer may be desultory, for both have many points from which to begin, so many, and so varied instances of love and grace, that they would be lost in the maze, were there not one great centre round which all were to be arranged—the gift of Christ.

Yet, if we talk of depravity of heart, and natural enmity to God, men start back from the charge. Some evil they may admit, but the term depravity they spurn, and why? Because they compare themselves with their fellow-men, selecting those only as instances of depravity, who are sunk far below their fellow-sinners in vice. They must compare their own heart with the character of God, and the holy law he has given. They must compare their hearts, honestly and truly, with the innocent and holy state in which man was originally created, and, in which state, they must return to God, if they expect to be accepted. The

great and dangerous mistake, here, is this, that they judge themselves, not by the strict law of God, but by the flattering judgment of man. They base their security on the false premises, that there is an average morality, and certain mixture of good and bad, which is to be taken as the standard of acceptance with God, as it is with men; forgetting, or willing to forget, that they are calculating on a principle just as applicable to the apostate angels and lost spirits, as to themselves, and, that with both, however the comparative degree of guilt may vary, yet one and all are, without a single exception, and without evasion, unclean, unholy, sinful, depraved, or be the term adopted what it may, utterly condemnable, and condemned by God.

FRAGMENT VIII.—CHARACTER OF GOD AND MAN.

Two essential principles, on which the christian religion rests, as on pillars, are, the holiness of God, and the depravity of man. If either be denied, there is at once a doubt, thrown, not only on the nature of the work of Christ; but even on his very existence. Or, if the historical fact be admitted, that such a person was really in this world, we may, without violence, to any rule of reason, deny all the account given of him, and of his undertaking, in the Scriptures. Few, I should rather say none, who acknowledge a God, dare to dispute his claim to holiness, and yet practically, there are many who make it little better than an empty name. There are many, who deny the natural depravity of the heart of fallen man, and still more, who palliate or gloss it over, so as to leave little call for fear or humiliation, and scarcely any ground, or necessity, for even the vague mercy of God. Such inconsiderate men do count the blood of the covenant, an unholy, that is, a common thing. They deny not that the blood of Christ was shed, but they little

think that it was the blood of him who made them, that blood of atonement, which is so precious in the sight of the Father. They admit the death of Christ, to be an event, which cannot be denied, but they feel much inclined to think, that it may be honoured by the bare acknowledgment. Start not at the presumptuous thought, for it is not a fiction of the imagination. It is a melancholy, and more than melancholy, a dreadful truth, that too many, who cannot deny the history of Christ, and dare not repudiate, altogether, the cause of his sufferings, do thrust from them, as far as they can, all consideration, or conviction, of their personal interest, in these sufferings, or their utter destruction, without them. Were they to examine, and strictly scrutinise their feelings, they would be compelled to acknowledge, that they felt something, like conferring a favour on the Redeemer, by consenting to admit, that he really did die, in order to do a something, or other, for their benefit. Ah! these indeed would confer a favour on the Redeemer, did they truly honour, and trust to his work. What! confer a favour on the Redeemer, on the high and holy, maker of all things, who dwelt in great humiliation with men, but is now exalted, beyond all comprehension, in glory. Yes, it is true. Blessed, solacing, delightful thought. He,

who wept over Jerusalem, rejoices in the salvation of a sinner, presents each new suppliant, as a trophy, before his Father's throne, as an additional satisfaction for the travail of his soul. Think, then, of the dreadful guilt, of not only refusing, and contemning this offer of salvation, through a Saviour's death on earth, and intercession in heaven, but also of rejecting, and grieving his holy Spirit, and preferring the mere creature of a moment, the veriest and most worthless trifle, perhaps the deepest pollution, to the holy, compassionate, and all-powerful Jesus, who, in his human nature, and character of mediator, is standing continually within the veil of the heavenly temple, pleading with God for man, and with man for himself, able and willing, to save to the uttermost all who come unto him.

FRAGMENT IX.—THE COVENANT OF GOD.

ADAM was created holy, and could, and did, in consequence of the purity of his nature, offer to God an acceptable service. He was free from a single stain, and, till the fatal moment of his fall, he yielded an entire, a willing, and a holy obedience, to his God, and was accepted in his own person, inasmuch, as he fulfilled the purpose for which he was created, and rendered a cheerful and undeviating homage to his creator. Had earth been peopled with the progeny of this holy man, then had it continued to be a holy paradise, and God would have manifested himself, in love and approbation, and in all fatherly kindness, and care, to the happy, because unsullied, race. There should have been on earth, what once existed in the whole of God's dominions, a multitude, who, without one exception, were holy, obedient, and happy. Each individual, should have stood on the covenant with Adam, so long, as he in all respects conformed to it. But by the fall, there not only has been a loss of the essential quality of holiness, but the will has become perverted,

and the understanding darkened. The mind of man, has in all, and in every part, undergone a change, and whatever may be the opinion of the inconsiderate, the intellectual faculty has been impaired, as surely as the active has been depraved or perverted. Were any special proof of this demanded, I need only refer to the judgment, or opinion, formed of the holiness of God. Without an express revelation from God himself, to fallen man, without a distinct personal illumination by the Spirit, this cannot be understood. A vague, undefined, and most inadequate notion, may be indeed entertained; but a clear, correct, and reverential idea, can only be obtained, or possessed, by the work of Christ, who declared, that he came into the world, that men might know the only true God. This knowledge, however, would have been of no avail to sinful and helpless man, had not the knowledge of Jesus Christ, been conjoined with it; for thus the infinite holiness and justice of God, came to be revealed, along with a manifestation of his wisdom, power and mercy. No unassisted descendant of Adam, has ever discovered, or known, or felt, the holiness of God, or any of his other perfections, and, to the present day, and in a christian land, those who are, merely, the descendants of Adam, and, to use scripture

language, bear his image, do proceed on his original covenant, offering to God, just as much obedience, and just such a portion of the heart, or rather of the fancy, as they choose to yield. And on this offering, whatever it may be, they claim the favour of the Almighty, or at the best, throw themselves on his mercy, and indulgence, for their deficiencies, voluntary or involuntary. They have a feeling, that if mercy and forbearance, and a kind reception, were refused, it should be an act of severity, if not of injustice, toward a frail and erring creature, altogether inconsistent with the character of God. Such is the principle, such the notion, which universally prevails, amongst those, who think at all upon the subject, in whatever way it may be modified, or disguised. The goodness of God, displayed to Adam, antecedent to his fall, for, till then, neither grace nor mercy, were required, and the paternal kindness, and love, and care, bestowed upon him, in his state of innocence, are still claimed by his descendants, notwithstanding the awful change which has taken place in the nature of man, and his relation to God. The scripture, gives a very different view of the case, from that taken by man. The simple act of disobedience on the part of Adam, laid him under the wrath of God. It sullied his soul,

and therefore he could no longer by any possibility, stand accepted by God. He was driven from paradise, and the whole earth was cursed for his sake. If we believe, that there ever were a garden of Eden, or that the earth was ever fairer, and more glorious than now. If we believe the history, which tells us that Adam was banished from the garden of the Lord, sentenced to return to the dust, from whence he had been taken, and, that till the day of his death, he should eat, in sorrow, the herb of the field, of that field which should bring forth thorns and thistles. If we believe these facts, we shall have evidence, enough, to convince us, that God has for ever thrown aside the covenant of works, as a covenant by which man could claim approbation, or acceptance. The very clouds and tempests which pass over the earth, and the various desolations which have taken place, are standing monuments of God's displeasure, and of the sweeping away of the first covenant. The death of every man that is born, is a proof that God's justice, and holiness, and truth are upheld, whilst the sorrows of life, varied and multiplied from birth to the grave, most surely testify that God will not look on sin without abhorrence. They proclaim to all, who will listen to the holy, but awful sound, that God is the same

now that he was, when the judgment was held in Eden ; aye, that even one sin, though committed by a soul, previously innocent, is ruinous and unpardonable, without a restoration to perfect purity. Ah ! it is the very plea used by men to extenuate their guilt and comfort them with hope, which will, eventually, be found to bear strongly against them, and sweep away the deceitful refuge. It is that very frailty and sinfulness of our nature, on which we build and rest our excuse, for those transgressions we commit, and, which we, too often, blindly view as venial, which will condemn us. A sinful nature must either be rejected, or it must be destroyed, changed, made new, or holy, in all respects. To plead the depravity of the soul, as an excuse, and a ground of acceptance, is an act, too gross, and impious, to be avowed by men ; and yet, if the covering be taken off, and the secret thoughts, hopes, and excuses, of men be exposed, it will be found, that in truth, the same excuse is made, as by Adam, the woman whom thou gavest me, to be with me, she gave me of the tree—the nature I possess, is too weak to resist, and if sinful, it is such as thou gavest me. The nature is made an excuse for the transgression, whilst, in verity, it should be viewed as the foundation of the danger, the head and front

of the offending, the essential ground of rejection, independent of all overt acts of sin. It is no extenuation of guilt, that man is frail and sinful by nature, for there is an offer made of a change of nature, and of strength to resist, even by the association of the Holy Spirit. In the region of misery, the abode and dwelling-place of apostate spirits, there is no offer of a change of nature, no gift of the blessed Spirit, no voice proclaiming the gospel of a Saviour's work. There is there, doubtless, in all the horror and blasphemy, a full display of the depravity of our nature; and in the midst of those curses and imprecations, uttered against the Almighty, and against themselves, there is the dreadful knowledge, that no holy power is there exerted on their behalf, and an awful, yet everlasting proof, that a soul left to itself, only plunges deeper into guilt, and more intensely feels the misery it entails. It is from this dreadful prison-house, that the value of a Saviour and the absolute necessity of a Holy Spirit, may best be proved to the thoughtless, who lower the attributes of God, or feel a secret desire to rely on his bearing, with what they call, the frailties of nature. Alas! do all the torments endured, all the full and appalling knowledge of the evil, and effects of sin, work a change in the heart, true repentance, and a

sincere desire to be reconciled to a justly offended God? No, the judgment is passed, and the doom fixed, for ever fixed, for without holiness no one shall see God; and there is no Saviour there to arrest the course of sin, and send a sanctifying Spirit to make lost souls holy.

There was mercy extended to Adam, but it was mercy, exercised and displayed, through a covenant, in which all the attributes of God shine forth with a splendour, never before witnessed by angels. Mercy is offered to his descendants, but mercy very different from that claimed by unenlightened man. It is mercy, in so far as we consider, the means of the gift. It is mercy, that led to the eternal covenant in the Godhead, and the proclamation of that covenant to man. But man must not go to the throne of God, pleading his attribute of mercy as a ground of acceptance. No man is excused by God on that plea alone—it is a gross and a fatal delusion, to suppose so. Rich, indeed, and glorious, is the display of mercy to fallen man, but it is a mercy united with justice. The mercy of God cannot be exercised, in the acceptance of any polluted or unholy creature, and he who goes to judgment, pleading the mercy of God and nothing else, goes forward to rejection. No! if the mercy

of God, infinite as it is, could have been pled with avail, we should have had the fallen soul of Adam, still, inhabiting Paradise. We should have had a holy God, holding communion and friendship, with an unholy soul. We should have had mercy, at the expense of truth and justice. No! there must be not only a full compensation made to justice, an entire and evident vindication of the truth of God, by the punishment of sin, but there must also be, either, a perpetual banishment of the stained and corrupted soul, or there must be a complete, miraculous, change of that soul, so as to render it no longer stained or impure. There must, so far as we can see, be altogether a new race of men, the formation of a new creature, and there is so. Here is that mystery, undiscovered by the heathen world, brought to light by the gospel, exhibited with all the brilliancy of a divine revelation, preached to man by the very God of truth himself, in that way which he in his wisdom, has deemed most fitting for man, and best adapted to all the ends he has in view ; and, yet, with all these advantages, and under all these circumstances, it is not only viewed with indifference, but either altogether misunderstood or even rejected by many. Jesus is the truth. In him we behold all the attributes of God harmonizing in the

reconciliation with sinners. In his blessed and finished work, we see an atonement for the sin of Adam; a righteousness worthy of God's acceptance, when imputed to Adam; and a regenerating and divine Spirit descending to the garden of Eden. He descends to perform the mighty work of changing, and once more sanctifying, an unholy and stained soul. Adam, is now, neither what he was at his creation, nor what he was when he broke the command of God; but he is placed in a new relation to God, in one respect, a nearer and a more elevated relation, for, the very Spirit of God dwells in him, and he is created anew in Jesus, united to him, continuing to live and to live safely, and to live for ever, because Jesus lives. The one life depends on the other, and the first Adam is now living in, and by, the second. His posterity go forward, now, to the judgment of God, rejoicing in the mercy of God, but not pleading that attribute as their security. They adore the rich and glorious mercy of God; but it is mercy in giving a Saviour—they are saved by mercy or grace, but not by an act of indemnity or favour, without compensation, and regard to all the attributes of God. There could be no greater manifestation of mercy and love on the part of God, than giving his own Son;

and, the offer of acceptance in him, being received by the sinner, he pleads the finished work of Christ, and, whilst he adores the mercy of the Holy Trinity, he rests on no vague hope of compassion on the part of God, in overlooking his offences, or of being lenient to one unatoned-for sin. But he holds firmly by that anchor which enters within the vail ; he perils his soul on nothing but the covenant of grace, of which Jesus is the mediator ; and well may he trust to that, for the more it is examined, the more comprehensive is it found to be. It is, indeed, well ordered in all things, and sure ; and, in it, he finds a purchased pardon for all his sins ; a sure and certain hope of peace and friendship, with a once offended, but now reconciled God.

An essential part of this covenant, is, that those given to Christ shall be made holy. There is more accordance between the two covenants than some suppose, for, in both, the quality of the accepted soul is holiness. In the period of the first, this was possessed by Adam, in his own nature—under the second, it is communicated ; but in both, it is indispensable, and this fact ought to silence all claim to be accepted on an inferior scale ; an atonement must be made to the justice of God for sin, as well as a removal of the quality of sin.

There is no middle condition between a sinful and a holy soul ; the soul must either be pure or spotted. It never can be pure or perfect in holiness, till released from the body. Then, shall the work of sanctification be perfected. In the mean time, it is begun, and going on, as a part of the work of Christ, who will, at death, complete the change. Nothing short of perfect holiness can satisfy God respecting every soul. Into heaven nothing defiled can enter. The holiness of God is a guarantee against the admission of a spirit, not perfectly pure and holy, into his presence. The sufferings and the obedience of Christ are imputed to his people, and form the plea of justification ; but there is nowhere an imputed holiness spoken of. This quality must be personal, and to procure it for a soul once polluted, is the ultimate object of Christ's work. There can be no acceptance without atonement and obedience, but these, as vicariously performed by Christ, would not have been sufficient, in the scheme of redemption, without the purchase of the Holy Spirit.

The gospel scheme, harmonizes with the divine perfection and attributes ; for, the atonement made, was infinite in value, as well as the obedience and conformity of Christ to the whole law and will of God ; and, it was a part of the covenant of grace, that a holy spirit was

to be given to the redeemed, even the spirit of Christ, to dwell in them and change their nature. Our High Priest lives, not to make a daily oblation, for by one sacrifice he has for ever justified his people; but, to plead daily, and continually, the merit of that one sacrifice of infinite value, which he offered. Blessed work, and blessed Priest! We cannot understand the work of Jesus, if we do not understand his nature, for his people are to be made one with him:—his human soul was not only, in itself, pure and holy, but did possess the Holy Spirit without measure. We are expressly told, that it was through the eternal Spirit, that he offered himself to the Father; and this Spirit is called, peculiarly, the spirit of Christ, for it is through him, alone, that he is sent to his people on earth, and abides in and with them in heaven. We cannot, and must not, disconnect the soul of the Redeemer from the divine Spirit. We comprehend not the nature of God, for we are finite in our powers; but, this much we know; that when the Son came into the world, veiled in the flesh, the Spirit dwelt in his soul. We are expressly told, that, as we have borne the image of the first Adam, so, shall we bear the image of the second; we shall assuredly in heaven, not only have our bodies made like unto his glorious body, but

our souls also shall be, made altogether holy, and for ever possess, to their fullest capacity, the presence and grace of the Holy Spirit. This is a truth, which is the foundation of all strict and faithful inquiry into our character. Safety is not to be found apart from sanctification. Those terms of ridicule applied to christians, are the very best which can be employed to test their principles. Are they called the Saints? Can there be a term better adapted to designate what they ought to be, or to annihilate, at once, all the vain pretensions, and delusions, which are founded on a spurious religion, and supported and fostered by the imagination of a heart, ignorant of the actual character of the holy God? His people must resemble him; they must be holy ones. Much, often, depends on the use of a term, and were that of sanctification more employed, as descriptive of character, there should be fewer mistakes as to what was, and what was not, religion. True sanctification, that is, perfect holiness, is the condition of the redeemed in heaven. But it is not begun there; it must commence on earth, by union with Christ and the reception of his Spirit.

FRAGMENT X.—ILLUMINATION.

A DARK cloud overshadows the children of this world, so that they see not the dangers which surround them: but, when the beams from the Sun of Righteousness begin to pierce this vapour, and both warm the torpid spirit, and display the scenery before unseen, the mind, as the light increases, sees more clearly the horrors of the place, and starts with dismay from a spot, which, till the dawn appeared, was clung to, as the very Eden of the soul. Illumination is the work of the Spirit, enabling the sinner to see the holiness of God, on the one hand, and his own evil condition, on the other. It is the very first step in religion; it begins with a feeble ray, and advances to clear and steady light. But it is only in heaven that its full splendour is thrown on the soul, and on all that the soul beholds. There may be an enlightening of the understanding, and a feeling of the heart, which lead to no useful result, to no permanent change of character; but that light which continues to shine, until the perfect day, is from the Spirit. It is not, in one

respect, sanctification, but in the christian, it is both the dawn which precedes it, and is afterwards indissolubly connected with it. It may, strictly, be said to precede sanctification, or the holy change; but it is impossible to say where the one individually ends, and the other joins it. Nor is it useful, were it practicable, to inquire, for, from the first moment of the life of grace, we date the life of holiness—and, though the early rays of heavenly light, shining on the soul, may not be felt as accompanied by an actual change, yet, even then, the vital spark is implanted; and it is more a question of the schools, than of the redeemed, to tell the peculiar work of the Spirit in the two. A man without taste and feeling, may listen, without emotion, to the most heart-stirring poetry; whilst he of keener sensibilities, and more delicate and refined mind, is transported, as it were, into a new existence, by what, to the other, appears a mere narrative of facts. Is there a man who will deny the incapacity of some for understanding, far less relishing, particular parts of human knowledge, on the sole plea that such capacity ought to be common to the whole race. Is there one who will deny the effect of particular powers of the mind, and the higher capability to which it may be advanced, and who, yet, will say that no power is requisite

to make a dark and sinful mind comprehend, what God himself hath declared to be a mystery, or, to make a heart, which is naturally cold and dead to all that is godly, warm and alive to new things. It is, indeed, but a faint comparison between illumination, by the Spirit, in spiritual perception, and the influence of refinement, in the production of intellectual pleasure.

We may call illumination, sanctification of the understanding, which, formerly, from its darkness and deadness, could not discover, or admit truth, more than the heart could feel it. "The *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are *foolishness* unto *him*, neither can *he know* them, because they are spiritually discerned." They are discerned by the Spirit. Paul, prays for the Ephesians, that "the eyes of your understanding being enlightèned, ye might know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," which was to be effected by obtaining "the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him;" also, that they might "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," that is which no mere reasoning, or unassisted knowledge, could give. He also speaks of their "having the understanding darkened, being

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alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them.”—And Peter writes to those who were called “out of darkness into his marvellous light;” not into light of their own producing, but into God’s light, a light well styled marvellous—for, till the command be given, it is true of every man that his “darkness comprehended it not.” It is called “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,” of whom it is declared, “in him was life, and the life was the light of men.” It displays, more or less vividly, but always distinctly, the work of Christ. It exhibits the character, proves the existence of sin, shines into the secret recesses of the heart, and there discovers to the soul, pollution and corruption, and deformities and rebellion, and their deadly evil, where nothing wrong was before suspected. But it is not the light in the hand of the avenger of blood, that thus bursts on the heart. It is light from the cross, though the cross may not at first be seen. It is the light from Jesus which, immediately, dispels the former darkness, so as to show how utterly unlike the heart is, to the heart required by God, and how entirely it is unfit for his acceptance, and how helpless it is by its own powers. But this light cannot shine long, or be long beheld, without, also, manifesting that work which is so intimately connected with

the knowledge of sin, and so interwoven with the wickedness of man, and the holiness of God. It displays that amazing work in its full adaptation to the wants of man, and the requisitions of God. It shows its perfection as to efficiency, and extent, and durability—that, in power it knows no limit, in richness and freeness it cannot be bounded, but exceeds all that can be conceived by the imagination of man. All those dark doubts, and fears, and dreads, which spring from the view of sin, are dispelled by the light which shines from around a merciful Saviour;—to some, in weak, yet steady rays; in others, bursting on the soul in all the glory of meridian splendour, and calling forth the transporting exclamation, “Thanks be unto God.” This is indeed the highest glory of illumination on earth, and it is accompanied with increasing sanctification of spirit. We cannot draw the line between the various works of the Spirit of Christ, but we look to the whole work, in all its power and glory, and rejoice in that precious agency of the Divine Person who entered, equally, with the Father and the Son, into the scheme of redemption, and immutably confirmed the covenant of mercy and grace. Some leave, too much, out of their thoughts and desires, love and service, to this Holy Spirit. They look to

Christ as their mediator and Redeemer, and to the Father, as a God who is to be reconciled ; but they hold little fellowship with the Spirit,—yet he is the holy, and gracious, kind, agent by whom they are taught, and sanctified and blessed, and preserved, and whom they are warned not to grieve. Did christians justly estimate the necessity and the work of the Spirit, and the value of his presence, there would not only be fewer self-delusions in religion, but much more habitual circumspection,—much more careful watching and praying, with deeper impressions of the reality of his presence, and more fervent desire for increased communion and fellowship, with that Holy One who claims our heart for his temple. The awful thought of his being present, though unseen,—of his continually offering his aid, and communication and comfort,—of his checks through conscience, and his encouragements through the sacrifice of Christ, ought to make us live more closely with him, and more devoted to him. It has been well said, that two cannot walk together unless they be agreed ; if we delight in the company of the Spirit, if we rejoice in him as the solace of our souls, if we mourn when at any time we discern him not, if we are anxious to be taught by him, if we love him as the Spirit sent from Christ—

and the Spirit who, with Christ, delighted in the work of mercy, and is engaged to carry it forward,—if we trust to his regenerating, sanctifying, and preserving influence, then, indeed, may we look for the full revelation of the glory, which Christ will show to his people in heaven. There is naturally a voice from the human heart, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man,”—a voice, not of humility, but of repugnance to the holiness of God. But, when the Spirit changes the heart, then is the holiness of God a source of comfort and joy: and the Spirit of holiness is welcomed; Come Holy Spirit, come, take of the things of Christ,—show them unto me, make him precious to me, unite me to him, and enable me to know, and to feel, the blessedness of having the love of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.

FRAGMENT XI.—SANCTIFICATION.

SANCTIFICATION is not a partial, but an entire change of the soul; all the powers of the mind, and the feelings of the heart are influenced, none are unaltered; the judgment is sanctified, so that the truth is now understood, and the character of God is known. A full, cordial, undoubting assent, is given to the testimony of God, respecting himself and his creatures. The imagination is sanctified, so that the thoughts of the heart which were only evil, and that continually, are now pure and godly. The memory is strengthened to remember, more frequently, the great things done by Christ,—the whole active powers, the will and desires, and feelings, are all made heavenly, and accordant with the mind of Christ. To describe the condition and fruits of sanctification, would require that the operation of the Holy Spirit, should be followed in every thought and action, for the influence is complete, and universal. There is an entire change, or renovation, by the presence of the Spirit, and to enumerate the effects or manifes-

tations of this, would be to examine the whole life of man, which in all, and every part, is devoted to God.

Perhaps, the first fruit, is to destroy the enmity which existed against God, and to produce a gradual change from estrangement and disguised aversion, to admiration and love. This is mainly done by seeing the excellency of the holiness of God, and the blessedness of holiness itself. Till there be an estimation of the value of holiness, an admiration of it, a desire after it, there can be no love to God, nor any rejoicing in his holy perfections. It may be said, that the very first effect of the presence of the Spirit, is deep remorse and fear, leading ultimately to a desire of reconciliation, and an earnest inquiry into how that may be accomplished. But I would rather include this, in the consequences of seeing and feeling the holiness of God, in a way never done before. There is no longer an anxiety to avoid God, and to banish all thoughts of futurity, but there is a growing desire to come unto him, and a cordial wish to be brought unto him by Jesus. It is impossible to disconnect the consideration, and knowledge, of the holiness of God, from the great work of redemption by Christ. They are, from the very first, connected, in the mind, by the Spirit, though, per-

haps, not so distinctly as to afford, at once, joy and peace, and full dependence on the Saviour. But, as the soul advances, be it slowly or quickly, in the christian life, the whole attributes of God are found to be indissolubly united with the undertaking of Christ; for, the revelation of the Trinity, is a revelation, both of the holiness and mercy of God, and the only ground of hope or comfort to the sinner.

The Holy Spirit cannot be present, and influence the soul, without ingrafting, more or less distinctly, his own nature. The love of holiness must, therefore, prevail in proportion to the degree of sanctification, and the very holiness of God becomes, now, a source of gratification and delight. The soul now loves God, not merely for his mercy and goodness, but for his infinite holiness. This, is indeed, a wonderful change; a soul, lately, altogether insensible to the excellence of holiness, indifferent to the character of God, unwilling to be like him, anxious to avoid all true intercourse with him, seeking all its enjoyment in sin and rebellion, (for, strong as the charge is, it is true of every sinner, that he is a rebel, and, with more or less avidity, serving the prince of this world,) is now by the mighty power of the Spirit, made a son of God, possessed of the same mind which was in Jesus, loving the

Father as he did, and giving thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. The natural state of man is inconsistent with love to God. It is not necessary in order to make out the truth of this, that a man should feel positive hatred to God, and make an open avowal of rebellion. But there is, in point of fact, a state of warfare between God and man. A claim on the one part, and, at the least, a tacit denial on the other; a requisition of a certain quality on the one hand, and a total want of it on the other. A call for love, and an answer of indifference. Now, it is to change this state, that the Spirit is offered, and is essentially necessary. There must be such an alteration produced, as shall make man perceive the holiness of God, instead of merely admitting it as an undeniable truth, and, perceiving it, admire, and desire to resemble it.

But the change does not stop here. There is now a distinct perception of the infinite love of God in the whole scheme of redemption and sanctification. The soul can now truly say, "God is love." Ah! why was not this sooner known and felt. Were the blessings of providence so lightly esteemed, were the daily care and mercies of God, so variously and incessantly displayed, no proof of his love. From whom came all the comforts of life, all the pro-

tection from danger, the delivery from evil. Who made the morning and the evening to rejoice, and crowned the whole with loving-kindness. Alas ! all those mercies were not beheld as proofs that God is love. To them, man is, in general, as insensible as the beasts, who are fed by the same hand. It is not till the Spirit sanctify the soul, that God is known in his attribute of "love," and it is not till it discover and feel the greatness of his gift, to save and sanctify a sinner, that the greatness and glory of divine love is in any degree comprehended. Those temporal blessings, which formerly were received with indifference, perhaps with discontent, are now felt to be connected with the gift of the Son, and reflect with a brightness before unseen, the love of the holy Trinity. But it is in the covenant of grace, that the love of God, shines with a splendour, that is indeed full of glory. It is in the inconceivable mercy of the gift of Christ, that the soul perceives and feels that God is "love." The love of each person in the Trinity, and all the various circumstances, connected with the manifestation of Jesus, are present, in such rapid succession, and so blended in the mind, that no sooner is one mark of infinite love, beheld, than another is ready, not to displace it, but to add to its value,

so, that the soul, at length overpowered, by the immensity of the revelation, and the intensity of feeling, can only exclaim, God is love ! The holiness of God had been seen, when the Spirit first moved on the dark and sinful soul, but it was, then, a fearful sight. Now, there is reconciliation through the divine Redeemer, and the soul separates not, in her rejoicing, the holiness, from the love, of God, and loves not merely his mercy, but also his purity.

There is a desire to resemble God in holiness ; not a faint and inactive wish, but a keen, persevering, and increasing anxiety, to be pure and holy. There is a delight in the attribute of holiness. It is the first, and strongest, solicitude to be like the saints, who are perfect in holiness. It is the continued longing of the soul, to be delivered from all sin, and to attain to the blessed purity, which exists in heaven. Great, and acute, is the grief that sin still prevails, fervent the prayer, that it were not merely subdued, but eradicated. In proportion as the soul is sanctified is the delight in the love of God, and the sorrow that the work of regeneration is not more complete. In proportion as the soul is weaned from sin, and enabled to hate and shun it, is the humility and the abasement ; for one single spot is beheld as deep contamination, and the pride of self-righteous-

ness is energetically discharged. There is an increasing delicacy of perception in all that relates to sin, and, whilst there is a glowing love to God, as a holy God, and a firm dependence on Jesus, for final and complete salvation and purification, there is also such a hatred to sin, such an insatiable desire for purity, such a striving after the similitude of the Saviour, as keep the soul both lowly and watchful, but not gloomy or desponding. For, another fruit of sanctification, is trust in the promises of God. By the Spirit, the soul believes all that God has declared, does not merely admit that God is true and faithful in all his ways, but places a perfect, active, unvarying, and uncompromising belief, in every promise and declaration. There is a most efficient belief that God is true, when he says, the soul that sinneth shall die. There is no hesitation as to the certainty of the judgment of God against sin, in every degree. But there is, on the other hand, an equally steady belief, in the promise of mercy and perfection through Christ. Not an expectation of perfection here, but hereafter, in heaven, accompanied with a full persuasion that the work of regeneration shall go on, and that no one shall take from Jesus the soul he keeps. This trust in the promise and truth of God, gives an assurance of safety to the soul. It does not

render that soul more careless, less sensitive to the touch of pollution, or less conscious of his own evil nature. It does not produce that lamentable error, the hope that secret sin may be overlooked, and that the general good conduct, may give a title to acceptance. No. It leads the soul to hate sin, and struggle against it; but, amidst all her bemoanings, to rest on the unalterable covenant of grace. When there is truly present the Spirit of God, working in the soul, and ingrafting there, a delight in holiness, a perpetual struggle against sin, and a firm reliance on the mediation, or redemptory undertaking, of Christ, there will be hope, and full, perfect, and assured confidence as to the final issue. "I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." There is in this advanced state of sanctification, no doubt as to the power, inclination, or faithfulness of God, in relation to each saving promise. This is, indeed, what the apostle calls a full assurance of faith. It is an assurance, a perfect conviction, and consciousness, that the soul shall be kept, that the work of grace shall be carried on, and, that whatever may be the future means employed by God, whether prosperous or adverse, all shall tend to the same end. But this assurance to be safe, must be according to the

word of God. It must be accompanied by all the marks of advanced sanctification, and by a full measure of the Holy Spirit, indicated by fruits. There can be no safe assurance, where there is a tolerated love of sin, or indifference to the love of God, a lukewarmness in his service. There is perhaps, no period of an advancing christian's life, at which his confidence in, and appropriation of, the promise of God is so great, as when he is passing through the deep waters which run between him and eternity. Then, the promise is fulfilled that Jesus will be present. He is felt to be present. Faith is still required, but perfect vision is approaching. It is dangerous, however, to maintain, that this strong assurance is an essential mark of sanctification. It is a fruit of it, but there are many degrees of sanctification, and also various manifestations in different individuals. In all there is the character, but some of the holiest men are not, either from peculiarity of temperament, or other causes, permitted to have this powerful, unvarying, personal confidence. They are authorised to seek after it, but are not to repine, far less despond, if it be not granted. Lovest thou me? trustest thou me? are questions which ought to be listened to, and if the answer can be, Thou knowest that I do, even though feebly, there is no

ground for discouragement, though there may be for increasing energy, for persevering prayer, and constant watching

There is an unreserved acceptance of, and exclusive reliance on, the scheme of mercy revealed in the gospel. The soul, enlightened by the Spirit, sees its own condition, as God beholds it, and looks on the work of Christ as that perfect and all-sufficient work, which God declares it to be. There is, therefore, no self-gratulation, no complacent dependence on services offered, or laws observed, no attempt at justification by deeds done, or sentiments entertained. But, with deep humility, and a most thorough conviction, and lively feeling, of unworthiness, with a dislike to, and recoiling from, its own nature, because it is sinful, with a high sense of the requisition of holiness, by a God infinitely holy, and a just sense of the defect of that purity, the soul renounces all, and every plea, save that of offered mercy, through that divine work, which has finished all that God demands, or a sinful soul can require. There is, by the influence of the Spirit, an increasing dependence on Jesus in all his offices, and an experience of the validity of the promise, "when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth." For the soul sees the work of redemption, more and more,

as God sees it, though this perception be dark, indeed, compared to what it shall be in heaven. Now, this fruit of sanctification, this true knowledge of the work of Christ, and steady exclusive reliance on it, is, and must be, accompanied with a continued striving to avoid sin, and to increase in holy conformity to Christ. It would be waste of words to prove, that in proportion to the love of holiness, must be the dislike to sin. The saints who are perfect in holiness, are also perfect in their abhorrence of sin. The pilgrims on earth, hate sin, as they rejoice in holiness. It is their grief and burden, that they do not feel able to hate it, and shun it, entirely. Bitterly do they lament that there is still an enemy within, the flesh warring against the spirit. But they do not yield. They fight the good fight, in faith and hope, knowing that he is faithful who has promised them the victory. This leads to an earnest, and continual, application for the aid of the Spirit, to subdue sin, and make the soul meet for heaven. There cannot be a better proof of sanctification, than the existence of this strong desire for the Holy Spirit, and perpetual reliance on his power, nor a greater source of safety, than the uniform and ceaseless entreaty for his influence. The deep, and at the same time, true sense of the weakness of human

power, and the perversity of human will, makes the soul cling to the divine Spirit, as the shipwrecked mariner does to the plank, which alone can keep him from sinking. In proportion to the feeling of danger, will be the cry for help. In the same degree as sin is dreaded, will be the watchfulness against it, and just as that dread prevails, and that watchfulness exists, will be the dependence on the Holy Spirit, and the uninterrupted of the supplication for his presence and protection. As he who has actually enjoyed a happiness of which he had formerly only heard, is then more anxious for its continuance, so, he who has once experienced the influence of the Spirit, cannot bear the thought of his absence, both from a sense of his consequent helplessness, and also of his loss of comfort and holy desires. He not merely implores the presence of the Spirit, to preserve him from sin, but to fit him for heaven, by giving him such a frame of mind, and such purity of heart, as is suited to that holy place.

This earnest desire for the guidance of the Spirit, can only be the fruit of his presence already existing, and an effect of sanctification. It is no part of the natural condition of fallen man, to desire the Spirit; but it is an essential effect of regeneration, to cleave to the Spirit,

and trust to him for preservation from sin, and for a growing meetness for the immediate presence of God in paradise. It is no constrained, or forced, application which the christian makes to the Spirit, for, he considers it as his privilege to do so, and in proportion to his enlightened knowledge, and his sanctified experience, of the work and office of the Spirit, does he love and rejoice in him. He delights in communion with the Holy Spirit, even the Spirit that Christ possessed without measure, and whom he promised to send, after his ascension to glory. He views the Spirit, as one with Christ, in the work of his salvation, and with the same love which he bears to Jesus as the great procuring cause, does he love the Spirit who hath engaged to fulfil his part, in the covenant of grace and mercy. This love and thankfulness to the Spirit, as the agent in all his christian life, leads him to beware of grieving him, by sin and folly. He holds fast by his protection, knowing well that if his aid were withheld, sin would prevail. He unremittingly solicits his continued and increasing influence, as the only means of growing in holiness, and improving in his resemblance to Jesus. Nor does this dependence on the Spirit, and love to him, interfere with, far less diminish, his trust in Jesus, his love and gratitude to him and to the Father. He, on

the contrary, sees more clearly, and feels more sensibly, the united work of the Trinity, giving praise to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for that salvation which emanates from the Godhead. He looks forward with exceeding great desire, to the time when he shall enter heaven, and, therefore, he never rests satisfied with any attainment, or any holy disposition; but, feeling his inferiority, strives for more heavenly-mindedness, and entreats the Spirit to take more full possession of his soul, and make him more like the saints in glory. This leads him to desire and delight in more frequent communion with God, and more intimate fellowship in heaven. He feels that he is united to that holy assembly, which surrounds the throne of the Lamb. Jesus, who has been their Saviour, is his also, and the work in which they are engaged, is the one which is his delight. He pours out his soul, before the Lord, in prayer and praise, and in continual remembrance. He has God always in his thoughts, and fails not to contemplate the employment of saints, and the joy with which they rejoice, in freedom from sin, and in continually beholding the beauty of the Lord, and his infinite holiness. How delightful to live in heaven, whilst we are on earth; to have our conversation there; to hold constant intercourse and communion with our friends who

are there; and with all the assembly of the just made perfect, to praise, and serve, and love, the same Saviour, and rejoice in the same God; to look continually beyond time and sense, and all fleeting scenes, to our Father's house. Christians live much below their privileges, and deprive themselves of much felicity which they might enjoy.

This holy frame, produces lighter ties to this world, but an increasing feeling of the importance of time, and of the obligation to discharge faithfully the duties of time. He, by the influence of the Spirit, is able to feel that he is here preparing for eternity, and that this world through which he is passing, is not his world, or the place which he desires. He is only careful to go through it, as commanded, merely, as the road to heaven. He knows that it is both a dangerous and a devious path, but he follows his guide, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, but forward to the celestial city. Every hour is to him precious, because it is the will of God that time be improved for eternity. The vanities of this life he looks on, merely, as weeds of the soil on which he treads, and which he is forbidden to occupy himself with. The vexations and anxieties of worldly men, he ought not to know, for he has an inheritance in heaven. He never forgets the injunction,

“whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” “do all to the glory of God.”

This is, indeed, the sum and substance of holy living. It is the very embodying of the example of Jesus. It is the result of an influence which, if fully obeyed, changes earth into heaven, and the wayward sinner into the sanctified child of God. This ruling principle, of doing all to the glory of God, this blessed animation, checks all unholy desires, all evil thoughts, all forbidden acts. It is an irresistible incentive to every good work, and to the cultivation of every christian grace, a guide in every perplexity, a counsellor in every difficulty, a faithful monitor in the dangers of prosperity, and solicitation of pleasure, a paraclete in the darkness and gloom of affliction, or disappointment. It is displayed not only in the visible conduct, but it controls also the secret thoughts of the heart, the evil desires of a spirit within, and under the remains of sin. Ah! were the injunction continually obeyed, were there a constant and fervent will to act according to it, how much more nearly should we resemble Jesus, and become living epistles, known and read of all men. There would be no conformity to this world, in any of its evil maxims, or lax morality. There would be such a uni-

form, and open, and decided exhibition of the grace of God, as should leave no doubt, either as to character, or principle. Without austerity, or gloom, or affected peculiarity, the christian should yet be so distinguished from the men of the world, that, like the pilgrim in vanity fair, he should be, at once, known not to belong to the lord of the fair, the prince of this world. This life, whether viewed by himself, in secret, or beheld by others, in his daily conduct, should appear to be a transcript of the holy life of Christ, a condition rather resembling that of the redeemed in heaven, than the frail saint on earth. If any prayer spring from the heart for this sanctified state, it may be best obtained, by contemplating those of whom it is said, "they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." In heaven, the service is perfect, and the principle pure, for love fills the soul, and, on earth, the same spirit must prevail.

Man must have a new direction to all his conduct, he must act under a new impulse, and exhibit, in his new state, all his actions, and works, whether of probity, or kindness, or business, or of intellectual labour, irradiated by a light, which shed no lustre before, and stamped with a character new, and till now, unknown, for he does all to the glory of God.

In his private reflections, in his unseen duties, in his family intercourse, in his daily conversation, in his business, in his writings, in all, and in every part of his life, he feels his obligation to serve and honour his God. And will not this tend to chasten, rein in, and purify his thoughts? must it not, by the grace of God, control his temper, regulate his open life, every word, and every deed. Were the attainment of this state the subject of constant prayer, and the object of hourly effort, how many things should we do which we leave undone; and how many things should we shun and avoid, which we pursue or indulge in. The darkness of the night, the solitude of our recesses, should find us watching our thoughts, striving against sinful and unholy feelings, desires, or speculations. The ever present question would be, am I now glorifying God. I am in his presence, my inmost thoughts known to him. Are these such as honour him, and accord with his will. The intercourse of man with man, should be different; for, knowing and feeling, that they were the children of the holy Parent, and, in that Parent's sight, they would desire to please him, and in all their mutual transactions, glorify him. Each act of business would be just and honest, and, moreover, performed under the

conviction, that it formed part of the plan of God, in his regulation of the temporal and social condition of his creatures. Every circumstance, however trivial, would be viewed as subservient to the purpose of God and conducted agreeably to his will. Were the feeling of one man toward another, regulated by this principle, it would, and must, be kindly, gentle, and loving. If the same mind, which was in Christ, were in us also, how anxiously must we study the temporal happiness of all mankind, but above all, the salvation of souls, and the promulgation of the gospel. Then, indeed, should be universal philanthropy, the reign of benevolence, the kingdom of peace, and good will on earth. The sick and the needy, the poor, the afflicted, the destitute and forlorn, may each, and every one, find a friend in him, who does all to the glory of God. The wayward, the thoughtless, the scoffer, the ungodly, are all the objects of his deep commiseration, and his earnest prayer. By every means in his power, he carries to them the message of peace and reconciliation, for he mourns, as Jesus mourned, over a soul likely to be lost. At home and abroad, in season and out of season, he is anxious to glorify the Redeemer, by holding forth the offer of that mercy, which is the most splendid attribute of

God as beheld by a fallen creature. In his very amusements, in his studies, in his reasonings, in his works, in every mental pursuit, or literary acquisition, he renounces the ambition of human applause, and conducts all with the ardent desire, that they may be to the praise of God. He prays for a blessing on these, and feels that he obtains strength, and industry, and perseverance, and increased activity, from the reflection, that he is trying to make all subservient to the glory of his Father, who is in heaven. Were this principle in its full extent, universal in its influence, and efficient in its operation, then should all aggression of one man, against another, cease. Then should there be no distrust, no evil speaking, no malice. Human laws, restraining the evils of men, should no longer be required; righteousness and peace should overflow the earth. Then should be heard "a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God, is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The time comes, when Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and when the kingdoms of this world, shall become the kingdoms of our Lord. Who does not wish that the glorious period had arrived? But let,

it be remembered, that the blessedness of that time, rests on the fulness of sanctification, and the universal desire which shall then prevail, to do all to the glory of God. By fervent prayer for the Spirit, by earnest endeavours to improve by his promised influence, by humble and constant watching, that we may truly live with God, we may in our own experience, have an anticipation, or view from "the mountains of Nebo," of that happiness, which shall attend the great outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days.

Another visible effect of a sanctifying influence, is a mild and gentle disposition, and conduct toward others. Some have naturally, and by indulgence, a rougher and harsher manner than others, and which they little care to alter or subdue. Some speak strongly and keenly, on the plea of exposing error, or enforcing good, more effectually. Some indulge in brusquerie, perchance in evil-speaking. Now, there can be no evil-speaking, if there be no evil-thinking; there can be no harsh action, if there be no harsh thought, there can be no unkind word, if there be no unkind feeling. The seat of all evil is in the heart. Some may conceal, better than others, what passes there. But if the heart be sanctified, there is no need of a vail, no check necessary to the

expression of feeling. Our Lord says, "Be ye harmless as doves," and "except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The apostle says that the wisdom which cometh from above is "peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy," and advises us to "speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing meekness unto all men." Were this holy spirit more prevalent, this meek disposition more cultivated, how much happier should the world be, and how much should the evil and bitterness of life be diminished. I urge not an affected, hollow, hypocrisy of manner, an artificial slowness and precision, and mawkish softness of tongue, glossing and varnishing the unholy thoughts of the mind. But I urge the cultivation of the inward desire, to have all unkindness, and hatred, and envy, and malice, rooted out of the heart and every kind, and gentle, and heavenly disposition luxuriating in their place. I urge an increasing remembrance of our Lord's injunction, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." This state is not to be acquired by one effort, by a single powerful resolution. It is not only the result of fervent prayer, but of perpetual watching. He who desires it, must begin at once, and not delay till to-morrow. He must begin by check-

ing the rising thought, by restraining the harsh word, by contending with the present, instead of a future temptation. He must not reserve his efforts for great occasions, but commence at once, even with trifles, if aught connected with the eternal state, can be spoken of as such. Now is the time for activity, for what is put off till to-morrow, shall most likely never be begun. Let him try, by the grace of God, to pass one day, then days, in the spirit of meekness and holiness; a greater blessing will attend to-morrow, and, finally, the christian temper, may be confirmed, strengthened, and embellished.

The influence of the Spirit can, alone, accomplish the mighty change, which renders the proud and evil heart of man, the source of universal mildness, and childlike simplicity of conduct. But this influence can only be obtained by prayer, and must be cultivated with unremitting effort. There is, perhaps, no surer indication that the pilgrim is approaching the end of his journey, than his exhibiting an increased resemblance to his Lord, in the subjugation of his passions, in his love to his neighbour, his good will to all mankind, his forbearance under injuries, his anxiety to promote peace and happiness around him, and in the childlike gentleness of his whole deportment.

Of him it may be truly said, that he is already enjoying heaven in his own soul, and some of the glory of that blessed state is shed around him; and, if the holy work advance farther before his removal to his Father's house, it may indeed be spiritually said of him, as of Stephen, that his face is, as if it had been the face of an angel.

Akin to this desire, is that of continually looking to Jesus, and saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The wish is not to evade service, or shun obedience, or escape from the will of God. No. There is a fervent unremitting, anxious desire, to know the will and commandment of Jesus, for the purpose of fulfilling them. There is no murmur, no hesitation, scarcely a feeling that our will is in any degree opposed to that of God, or that there is any call, either for self-denial, or resignation. This exalted state is that of heaven, rather than earth, but even on earth, it is to a certain extent attainable. Think ye, that one, whom the Pharisees looked down upon, had not something of this disposition, when "she stood at his feet weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment." The recollection and persuasion of what Jesus has done,

and still does, for his people, form the inducement to his attachment. As Jesus, by his human nature, has a fellow feeling with every disciple, so has the disciple, a love, may I call it an exalted friendship, and affection, for his master. Even in this respect, Christ is placed between God and man. He is adored, and obeyed, and trusted, and loved as God ; but he is also beloved, as the man who has accomplished our full redemption, and who still, amidst all our sorrow, and in spite of all our provocation, is more than a brother. He is an unseen friend, absent from our sight, but continually present by his Spirit, and to our imagination. Is it presumption to say that we love the Redeemer, with the love that we bear to the dearest friend ? No surely, he is man as well as God. We can form no adequate conception of the glory of his person, or the compassion and perfection of his soul, but we can, so far, imagine the glory of the one, and the condescending love of the other, as to look by the eye of faith, on one whom we can both love and trust, and before whom we can fall down, and say, " my beloved is mine, and I am his." If such be our love to him who loved us, how is it to be shown, and what are its effects ? Surely he must be ever present in our thoughts ? to him do we cleave ; and with him do we con-

tinually discourse. His cause is our cause, his honour our honour, his desire our desire, his interest our interest; our souls and bodies we offer to him, and more than that, we strive to bring other souls to him, as a tribute, and them to him as a blessing. We have read that "he shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;" and how should we rejoice, if we can be the mean of bringing one additional sinner to acknowledge him for his Redeemer, and how should we esteem, and value those, who truly value him. Were it only a cup of cold water that we had to give, that should be offered. Take it, quench your thirst, for ye are the Lord's people. Come, rejoice and be glad, for Jesus loveth us, and is watching over us, and will be our guide, even unto death. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

There is a perpetual and holy fear of God, a continual impression, that "The Lord seeth." It may be said, that the christian should do all from love. But the command also is, "fear him, and keep his commandments," and the assurance is, that the fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom. In heaven itself, the hymn is, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" The thoughtless, and the wicked, are not afraid to offend. They fear not God, neither do they recollect that he

seeth. The sanctified, here, know the holiness of God, and tremble, lest they should ever think, far less act, so as to displease him. Like David, they may say, my flesh trembleth, for fear of thee. There is that continual impression of the holiness, the power, and the omnipresence of God, which restrains from sin, not as in the presence of a harsh, and unforgiving tyrant, but from love, from a perception of "the beauty of holiness," mingled with a feeling that God is not to be offended with impunity, but is to be had in reverence of all his saints. There are many occasions, on which the christian is withheld from sinning, by fear, rather than by love, and delight in holiness. It is well to fear, but this fear is only one principle in operation, one fruit of sanctification. It is well to be assured, that God seeth in secret, and knoweth the very thoughts of the heart; for the sinner, though he cannot deny this, is most willing to forget it. But the christian, impressed with the presence of God, wishes not that God should cease to behold him, or to know him. Aware of the wrath of God, against sin, still he wishes not, that God were less holy, and would permit sin. He delights, after the inward man, in the perfection of God, and gives him thanks, that, as a mean of grace, he should be taught by fear, to refrain from evil, and is not over nice

in analyzing the motive, and ascertaining the exact proportion of fear, and love, and sense of duty, which may be in operation. He is convinced, that the law of God is perfect, and only regrets, that he should do so little to please his constant Friend.

The Spirit of God, the Essence of holiness, dwells in the christian, and must be grieved with every sin, and can only reside in such sinful hearts, by the mercy of the covenant. It is uniformly, declared to be a dangerous thing, to grieve and provoke him, and the awful condition of the erring christian, can only be borne with, and the Spirit can only continue his abode, because he is a covenant God in Christ, a party to the everlasting scheme of redemption, and united with Christ in accomplishing it, and retained, in the provoking soul, by his intercession. This, indeed, is comfort, hope, and confidence, in the hour of trial, or of failure.

Another effect of sanctification, is an increasing desire for the ordinances of the sanctuary. Not only does the christian rejoice in frequent, and private, intercourse with God, and say, with David, "my soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly"—"seven times a-day, do I praise thee, mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might

meditate on thy word,"—or, like Daniel, "give thanks before his God;" but he also looks for a special blessing, in attending those public assemblies, appointed by God, for his worship and praise. What says David? "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee: a day in thy courts, is better than a thousand." "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power, and glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. O send out thy light, and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle; then will I go unto the altar of God, my exceeding joy, yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God." There is a promise by the Redeemer himself, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and who would not wish to meet his Lord? The disciples are called together for that purpose,

on a day set apart, to commemorate, for ever, the resurrection of Jesus. They assemble in the house of God, to join together in praising his redeeming love, in confessing their own unworthiness of his favour, in praying for his mercy and forgiveness, and for the promise of the Divine Spirit. They come together to hear his word, and to receive the counsel, the remonstrance, the comfort afforded by those, to whom he has promised, to be with them to the end of the world. They meet, as a prelude to the great meeting in heaven, and in the early days, they parted not till they had fulfilled the dying command of their master, to remember him in that blessed ordinance which he instituted. When the Spirit of Christ has sanctified and enlightened his people, there is no weariness in the sabbath, no unwillingness to meet in public worship, no backwardness to the holy communion. The day of rest, is looked forward to, as a day of joy and heavenly peace. It is prepared for, before retiring to sleep, by prayer and supplication, for a blessing on all the means of grace. It is met by a renewal of prayer and thanksgiving, an earnest anticipation of the presence of the Lord in the sanctuary, an ardent desire for the preparation of the heart, and a delightful expectation of the manifestation of the Spirit. There is fervent

and solemn prayer, for permission to go to the courts of the Lord, and for the blessing of Jesus, on all the services of the day. There is supplication for all the saints, but more especially for the ministers of the gospel, that they may be truly enlightened, and instructed, to declare the will of God, and edify the church. Ah! were this preparation duly made, these prayers fervently and sincerely offered, how much greater benefit, and holy comfort, should be derived from public worship. It is not on the part of Christ, that there is any failure. He is true to his promise, and meets with his people; but, if his people will not prepare, nor ardently desire to meet him, and earnestly urge his promise, and go in faith and hope to receive its fulfilment, is it to be expected, that they shall truly experience the blessing of his presence, and be enabled to say, I know and feel that my Lord is here?

FRAGMENT XII.—DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.

“WHATSOEVER ye do, do all to the glory of God.” This is, indeed, to live in heaven. There, the service is perfect, and the principle pure, for love fills the soul. There, “his servants shall serve him.” On earth the desire to obey this injunction, can only be possessed, and rendered active, by the Spirit. It is not fulfilled, by the mere regulation, of the outward conduct. It is deep-seated in the heart. It is a spring which produces the most minute act, and regulates the most secret thought. It is as universal, as it is perpetual, in its operation, alike potent, in the life and conversation, and in the regulation of the desires, affections, and will. It is not in activity only at times and seasons, in actions and determinations, connected with the weightier matters of the law, where the command is explicit, and cannot be misunderstood. It is not shown merely, in those unequivocal cases, which are, at once, distinguished as good or bad. But it is the pervading principle, which ramifies through every operation of the mind. It is a

quality of the soul itself, imbuing every thought and desire, so that whenever, or however, any manifestation of existence is seen or felt, there, also, is this present. Can this be less than perfect sanctification, and must not the soul so regulated, be indeed holy. It is the evidence to the individual himself, of this holy state. It is the manifestation of its existence to others.

If the injunction be obeyed, in all its strictness and universality, we have the very perfection of christian character. I say not that in this world of frailty and darkness, the judgment may not err; but no known sin can be indulged, nothing will be done, which the conscience tells ought not to be done, nothing left undone which ought to be done. Alas! where is this perfection to be found, and yet, to this we are commanded to aspire, and, to the attainment of this, the injunction leads. How different should our progress be, how different our conduct, how changed and subdued our hearts, how cautious and watchful our inmost thoughts, were we always to ask, "Is this to the glory of God?" Here, then, we have the test of vital religion, as well as the means of its growth. The injunction is not to be obeyed at certain hours, or in certain circumstances, but, like the mighty rolling of the ocean, without intermis-

sion, and, like it, irresistible. By the grace of God, and by a life of prayer, for without unceasing prayer, and never-failing watchfulness, no one is safe, every thought is examined and tried, by the strict rule laid down. Every action is judged of, before performance, and sanctioned as it proceeds. Every feeling, affection, and desire, watched, and regulated. All that constitutes the life of man on earth, whether the current of his thoughts, the transaction of his business, his hours of relaxation, or his fellowship with men, is subjected to the surveillance and command of this great principle. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," is the prayer which rises from the command. The corruption of the human heart, and frailty of the human mind, in this world, resist the full accomplishment of what the christian desires. But that is no excuse for neglect. Every victorious effort, every struggle, successful through the grace of God, invigorates the soul, and renders the farther conflict easier. Not to the unaided power of man is the victory due, but to the promised strength, imparted to those who earnestly ask, and faithfully co-operate with it, in this holy war. The christian is now consistent in his conduct, reflecting the image of Christ, holy and subdued in his mind, striving to do the will of God on earth, as it is

done in heaven, diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Kind and gentle to all mankind, forgiving even as he is forgiven, remaining, and working on earth, but truly living in heaven, mixing with, and doing his duty to, fellow-mortals, but associating with the redeemed above, and joining in their hymn of praise and adoration. To this happy and blessed state, some one may say, I humbly hope to reach, by asking myself constantly, and in every situation, am I at this moment doing all for the glory of God? Are my thoughts and engagements, such as I would wish them to be, were the call to depart to be suddenly heard? If not, let me at once flee from this evil, and ask grace to help, in time of need.

FRAGMENT XIII.—NECESSITY OF NATIONAL RELIGION.

IF we would know what the service, required by God is, we must look to that rendered in heaven; and, if we would learn what that state is, which exempts a society, or individuals, from suffering, we must seek it in the same holy place. There is a certain and unavoidable connexion between sin and suffering, and as surely as sin exists, so surely shall pain and sorrow prevail. Affliction springs not from the ground, nor does tribulation come by chance, either to a community or a person. The whole ways of man, are under the observation of God, and it is his declaration that sin shall not pass unpunished. In no instance, within the whole extent of his dominion, shall this declaration fail. There is no species of infidelity more dangerous, than the disbelief of this. The positive, unqualified, irrevocable assurance of the Almighty is, that sin, sin of every description and degree, must be punished. It was to bear testimony to the truth of God, in this respect, that Jesus came into this world, and sub-

mitted to suffering and death. The only way in which any individual can be spared from suffering, either here or hereafter, is by the substitution of the sufferings of Christ. It follows not from this, that those who believe this substitution, and are willing faithfully to accept of mercy through Christ, shall be spared from suffering in this world, but they shall have that suffering ultimately connected with a blessing. But it does assuredly follow, that whosoever will not come to the propitiation, and seek shelter in the finished work of Jesus, shall not only suffer punishment here, but endure, hereafter, the wrath of the Almighty. It may be long before the careless and indifferent, or the more glaringly wicked, meet with suffering here; or, even, if exempted from the more severe afflictions of life, there is a retribution to come. In like manner, it may be long before families, or communities, or cities, or nations, be subjected to visible punishment for sin, but in all of these instances, a perseverance in regardlessness to God, a neglect of his word and commandment, are sure to bring on a manifestation of Divine vengeance. And, as surely as a neglect of God's mercy, by an individual, shall end in his destruction, so certainly, shall indifference and disregard, on the part of a nation, to that same salvation, be visited by the judgment of an

offended God. It may be difficult, or at present, impossible, to interpret many of the prophetic declarations, but there can be no doubt, as to the connexion between national sin and national punishment. And, as sufferings are calls to individuals to repentance and reformation, so are there warnings given to a sinful nation, that the Lord is about to give the cup of retribution, if these warnings be despised. There are special events, and revolutions, in the condition of the world which are predicted, but which we are uncertain about, as to the time of accomplishment. But, that we have lived to see, and still to witness, some peculiar work of God's providence, and judgments on the earth, beyond what our fathers beheld, is clear, if we consider the desolation, the dreadful, and extensive sufferings, the sudden, and unexampled calamities, and changes, which followed the French revolution. We have only to look at the unsettled state of the world, to be satisfied that God is still speaking to his creatures, in a voice of anger, and is calling to his people, to remember that he is God. We are not to imagine that it is necessary to have a nation, polluted with gross and disgusting crimes, to make it a sinful nation. For, an indifference to the word of God, a general carelessness of his worship, and forgetfulness of his

presence, and apathy to the work of his redemption, are just as sufficient to constitute it a sinful and a godless people. And if it be true, that we are only preserved from destruction, and spared, here, in mercy, and blessed with the perpetual providence of God, on account of the intercession of Jesus, it follows, that a thoughtlessness of that work which he performed, is, of itself, a sin sufficient to merit the removal of those temporal blessings it has procured. But, if we, farther, think on the inestimable value of the eternal benefit, his work was intended to procure, and the preparation of the heart necessary for the enjoyment of that benefit, it is evident, that in the settled indifference to the Redeemer, and his covenanted mercies, which so greatly prevails, we must acknowledge that we testify ingratitude for our temporal blessings, and a fearful contempt of the promised deliverance from the wrath to come. Can such a state be safe?

No one can reflect on the events, which are at present taking place, without admitting, that there is a steady, determined, and persevering, as well as organized, attempt to undermine religion. It is, as if already, Satan had gone forth to deceive the nations, to gather them together to battle. The armies of Gog may not yet be in motion. But the infidel

power is at work. In no one of the varied, and portentous, events now occurring, is God recognised by any government, or any national attempt made to support his cause, or avert his wrath. If ever there was a time, when christians were, specially, called on to watch, and pray, and labour for the maintenance of religion, and openly to espouse the cause of God, it is the present. There is a solemn call made to all God's people, to come out of the world, out from its principles, and maxims, revellings and delusions, that they be not partakers of its plagues. There is a call to every one to look to himself, and repent, and turn to the Lord God. There is a call for prayer and supplication, for the defence of religion, and the turning away of temporal judgments. This shall at least bring down a blessing on the individuals, and who can say what protection it may afford to a nation.

FRAGMENT XIV.—TWO ESTIMATES OF THE WORLD.

THE desolate, and forlorn, the disappointed, and tempest-tossed, may join in one common confession of the evils of life, and, in the bitterness of their heart, acknowledge that this world, in truth, is a wilderness, and all its paths, steep, dreary and rugged. But tell the gay and the happy, who are basking in the sunshine of human happiness, and, ever and anon, contemplating the fairest, and the loveliest, of all that clothes the earth, with hearts warmed and gladdened by friendship, and all that can cheer, and rejoice, and invigorate a spirit, blessed, withal, by the belief, that no earthly ill is at hand, and, in possession of all that can make life desirable. Tell such a one, who is drinking the sweet cup of worldly gratification, and who has drunk it, till his whole soul be lulled, into that ease and refinement of pleasure, which seems rather a long dream of the imagination, than the actual feeling of the waking man. Tell such a one, in the midst of his garden of delights, that this is a dry parched land, a desert, wherein there is no

water, a place through which the pilgrim passes, with no desire to abide, but with an earnest longing for another country,—tell him this, and he will pity you as a fool, or condemn you as an ascetic. His own experience satisfies him, that the world has a charm, and that the pleasures of life, are both substantial, and to be desired. Every scene is gilded by the sun in all his glory, and varied in beauty, beyond the power of the poet to describe. He cannot believe that this enchanting world is under the curse of God. But touch such a man with the hand of deep affliction,—dash from his lips the cup of prosperity,—by one stroke, smite off all that has endeared to him a passing life, and, then, tell him to go forth and rejoice in all the loveliness of nature, and all the joys of life, and soon shall the confession be wrung from his heart, “miserable comforters are ye all.” But go farther, and let the man, who was rejoicing in all that can gladden the heart, or delight the eye, be once convinced of sin, once led to look beyond time to eternity, and, then, will that very man sicken at the utmost, that the world can do for him. Go still farther, and let this man once taste the joy of the Redeemer’s love, let his heart be truly sanctified, make him one with Christ, and with those who are in heaven, and then,

however much he may bless God for his earthly comforts, and however he may now prize and enjoy them as gifts of God, he looks on them as nothing, without the blessing of God, and feels, that indeed, this is but a dry parched land, leading to the city of everlasting habitations.

FRAGMENT XV.—OUR FATHER'S HOUSE.

WHO that has left a father's house, and the dear scenes of his native land, to meet with care, and toil, and isolation of spirit, in a place where all are strangers, and indifferent to his wants, and feelings, does not often call up, in his loneliness and solitude, imaginations and fancies of his former home, so keen and vivid, that for a time, they would seem to pass for realities. The bitter conviction comes, that there is an impassable gulf between him, and the delightful vision. But, even with this disappointing accompaniment, the mind still returns to the picture, and often lives as much in the distant field of fancy, as in the immediate land of his banishment. There are neither doubts nor misgivings, as to the reality of the distant home, nor indifference to the fancied pursuits and thoughts of its inhabitants. The very apartments, and furniture, and wonted hours of the family assembling, rise up with a vividness, and distinctness, on which the mind dwells with delight, and with which it connects the feelings, wishes, sorrows,

and anxieties of the inmates. Oft does he revisit the beloved spot, and oft does his heart beat, in the hope of, one day, exchanging the vision of imagination, for the enjoyment of reality.

We are away from our Father's house, from the celestial city, where Jesus is, and many of our friends are. Not more certainly, does the stranger believe in the existence of the abode he has left, than we may, of the existence of that we are hastening to. There is a spiritual world around us, bright with the glory of God. There is in the Father's kingdom, an innumerable company of the souls of the just, made perfect, both in holiness and blessedness. There, are waiting for us, dear friends, who have already finished their work here. There, is an assembly of angels, and the happy creatures of the Almighty, all rejoicing with a joy, to us unspeakable, and, to them, full of glory. There, is the gracious High Priest within the vail, in the heavenly temple, pleading for his people, and dispensing to those who are in the wilderness, those blessings which they require. There, is Jesus, the angel of the covenant, the prophet, priest, and king, of the redeemed. The praises of the heavenly host, are loud, as the sound of many waters whilst, the harps of Zion, are swept by

the harpers. They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, shout aloud for joy, saying, Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain. There is no cloud to their brightness, no sorrow mixes with their joy, one continued eternity of holy felicity, is running on. The blessed Jesus, is beheld as the Captain, who has led them to the promised land, and as the ever compassionate and powerful friend, who, in all their wanderings, never forsook them, who, amidst all their difficulties and dangers, and sinful failings, kept them fast by that anchor, which entered within the vail.

Whilst this line is perusing on earth, the praises of heaven are singing, the joys of heaven are the property of the saints. The ransomed of the Lord are beholding the great things which had been prepared for them. These are realities, but we are bound to the world around us, spell-spound by a perishing world, but still it is not the less true, that there is a spiritual world, in which the Redeemer dwells with his chosen, with the patriarchs of old, and with the last of our beloved friends, who have, perhaps, only the hour before, left us. The stranger, in a distant land, may forget his father's house, and, amidst the pleas-

ures and anxieties of his present state, may think little of the family to which he belongs. But, nevertheless, that family lives, and has its daily cares, and joys, and, morning and evening prayer may rise for his welfare. Even so, we may have little intercourse with heaven, but, still, the work of heaven goes on, still, the holiness and the happiness of its inhabitants are the same, and, still, for us, who are forgetting that family which is there, prayer and intercession may be offering, on our behalf, by the Priest of his people. And when these all-prevailing prayers are answered, and the Spirit touches the heart, and brings the soul to Christ,—then, does this heaven become our home, and then, do we look on this world, as only the land of our pilgrimage,—then, is the mind often absent from the present scenes, and its earnest desire is, to have its conversation in heaven. We cannot, indeed, see heaven, we can form but a most imperfect conception of it, and of those who are there. But the heart is there. We love the Father who is there, we trust in the Saviour who is there, we rejoice in the Spirit who is there. We cultivate the graces and dispositions which prevail there. We endeavour to join the dear friends who are there, in praise, and thanksgiving. We forget not those who have left us, but look, and, so

far as it is consistent with the will of God, we long for a re-union with them. We endeavour to do the will of our Father here, as it is done there, and in doing so, feel repose and confidence in his wisdom and love.

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FRAGMENT XVI.—ISAIAH'S VISION.

ISAIAH, had a vision of the glory of God, and saw the seraphim standing above the throne of the Lord, and one cried to another, and said, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." John, in his vision, heard from the four living creatures, the same ascription of praise, but saw more clearly the glory of the Redeemer. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, *and is to come.*" From this praise, "they rest not day and night." The whole host of heaven, ascribe glory, and honour, and power, to Him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever. The whole church, and every creature, whether in heaven or in earth, whether glorified in the sanctuary, or yet abiding on earth, waiting, here, for full sanctification, heard he, in one voice, offering their praise and adoration. The church, in this life, unites with the redeemed in heaven, and one general assembly glorify God day and night. Isaiah saw not a vision like this. He had indeed the testimony of the Spirit, as to

“the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow;” but this particular glory he did not see. But in the latter time, when the heavens were opened, the glory of God appeared, and there was, also, seen a multitude, which no man could number, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, Salvation to our God, who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. It is added, “there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God, *and of the Lamb*, shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.” They shall see his face, and shall be like him. Those happy spirits that John saw, continually behold the glory of Jesus, which he had from the Father, and they are with him, where he is; and the glory which the Father gave to him, he gives to them, that they may be one with him. With whom? Even with Jesus the Redeemer. He hath entered into heaven for us. There is no temple therein, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple thereof, and the ministration and worship of the saints, are without the medium of ordinances. We cannot, like John, see this blessed sight, but we can try to conceive it. We can follow our friends to heaven, and imagine, though feebly, the glory they behold, the pure and holy joy

which fills their souls, and the fervent adoration with which they look on him, who saved them from destruction, and brought them in his own good way, perhaps through manifold tribulations, to the land of everlasting blessedness.

FRAGMENT XVII.—THE CHAMBER OF DEATH.

How glorious is the dying chamber of the christian. It is the very union of time and eternity, a meeting of the living on earth, with the angels of heaven. The place is holy, for it is filled with those ministering spirits, waiting for the soul, departing from this perishing world, for the everlasting habitation of the redeemed. But glorious as this is, it shrinks before the greater glory of him who is present; Jesus himself is present, and the Holy Spirit is there, to finish the work of salvation. Ah! how different! could we see the throng in the chamber of the unsaved, departing, soul. If words cannot express, nor imagination conceive, the glory of the former, neither can the horror of the latter be supposed, where the bed is surrounded by fiends, eagerly waiting for their prey. But it is not in this solemn hour only, that these unseen spirits are beside us. They are constantly present, for good or for evil, in the bustle of the world, or the solitude of the lonely. By day and by night, are we surrounded by this unseen host, waiting, du-

ring all its pilgrimage, on the soul of man. Go into the sick chamber, it matters not whether it be of the poor, where there is filth, and want, and all manner of wretchedness, combining with disease, or, of the lonely sufferer who has no one to cheer him, or, of the rich, where the delicately shaded light, displays, with softened effect, the external comforts which surround the dying man, and the grief, which, compared to the rude suffering of the poor, is more like the imagination of the poet, than the real breaking up of a heart agonized with sorrow. Mark all the routine of the sick bed, the fruitless visit of the physician, the profound sympathy of friends, the prayer of the minister, too often desired, only, to close the last scene. Ask then, if there be not to one and all, a fast coming eternity, a message from the Lord, in the house, saying, "this night shall thy soul be required of thee," and this very night shall that soul see a holy and a just God, and hear the question, whether Christ has been indeed precious, and his redemption been, indeed, the chief desire in life, and the only hope in death.

FRAGMENT XVIII.—IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE.

“LORD, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.” The reply is most encouraging, as, even at the last hour, Jesus is willing to be gracious. But there may be more, in this narrative, than at first appears. It is not likely that the malefactor knew more than the disciples, who, even after the resurrection, looked for a temporal reign, and asked, “Lord, wilt thou, at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” The supplication, was an acknowledgment of Jesus as the King of the Jews, the Messiah, and may have had a relation to his releasing him from the cross, when he assumed his sovereign power, and restoring him, by his miraculous word, to health and soundness. The reply was spiritual, not temporal, in its nature. “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The history gives comfort to the dying penitent, and to surviving friends, inasmuch, as even a late prayer is heard, and amidst indistinct, and imperfect, knowledge, of some parts of the scheme of redemption, a sincere application to the Saviour, will not be re-

jected, and a reliance on his atoning work, will not be disappointed. My experience is, that words of comfort and encouragement to the dying, are more blessed, than those of expostulation or terror. God is a God of compassion, through Jesus, and let no one presume to limit that mercy, which is illimitable.

FRAGMENT XIX.—SUDDEN DEATH.

“BEHOLD I take away from thee, the desire of thine eyes, with a stroke.” It is, indeed, a mysterious dispensation of Providence, when we see cut off suddenly, by a stroke, one who, after much labour, had just risen to be a public benefit, and who, by his amiable and generous qualities, had endeared himself to a large circle of his fellow-mortals. All his toil and laborious study, lost ; all his gentle and affectionate kindness, for ever gone. This, indeed, is mysterious, and we say, God’s ways, are not as our ways. We discern not the reason, but we know that the event is not fortuitous. It is in wisdom and in mercy. It may be in mercy to the individual, who is taken from evil to come. It may be in mercy to those connected with him, by tender ties, calling on them for more perfect surrender of the heart to God, and a closer walk with Jesus. It is a solemn call to all, “Be ye also ready, for, at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”

FRAGMENT XX.—MEMORIALS OF THE DEAD.

WHEN we look at the memorials of the departed, be it the toy of the dear little prattler, or the relics of the older, his trinkets, all that he used or wore, all that he had been engaged with, or every thing he was fond of, how the heart saddens. All is connected with the dead, but to him they are as nothing. His purse, how useless now ! The apartment, once, cheered by his presence, though still decked with his ornaments, though now as it used to be, yet how still and lonely. We can hardly believe the loss to be real, but the overwhelming truth prevails. We no longer hear his well-known footstep, nor see the cheerful and happy smile, nor hear the melody of his voice. We awake from our dream, and feel, keenly feel, that he has gone, and that life is vain and fleeting. His eternal state, how solemn the thought ! is fixed, be it for bliss or for woe. We may be gratified by the remembrance of his many virtues, his numerous labours of love, his high estimation among men, but little could such comfort sustain us, were there not brighter, and

more glorious, hopes of his felicity, bestowed by Jesus. Happy, happy are they, who, under the load of affliction, can raise their hopes to heaven, and, imagining the happiness of their darling friend, find balm for the bleeding heart, and steady consolation from the fellowship of the saints, and the joyful prospect of joining that happy multitude. Such calls and sorrows, are indeed, mercifully, intended to draw us from a world we would not otherwise quit. Like the angel with Lot, they lay hold of our hand and say, "Escape for thy life."

FRAGMENT XXI.—LOOKING FORWARD TO DEATH.

“WHAT doest thou here, Elijah?” Some have considered this as a question of reproof, for having fled from the wrath and threats of Jezebel. It is not easy to see how this explanation can be given. The prophet was miraculously fed, to strengthen him in a journey, of forty days, and forty nights, to Mount Horeb. He had in the wilderness, under the juniper-tree, prayed that he might be released from this life. In the mount, he received an answer to his prayer. He was there told, that he was to go and anoint Jehu to be king over Israel, Hazael to be king over Syria, and Elisha to be prophet in his stead. Why this long journey was to be performed, between the wilderness and the mount, and the intimation given there, rather than in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida, we know not, nor in all probability, did Elijah know, till he was taken up to heaven. But this much we learn, that God, in his mercy, lays not on his servants, more than they can bear, and keeps them no longer here, than till they have finished their work. Even after the

gracious answer to his petition, he had still some more to do, and, without fainting, he did fulfil it. What must have been the glorious hope and joy, which, during the short time of his remaining here, filled his soul. And is not his case, a lesson, and a comfort to us. Under affliction, and trial, and temptation, we may have been anxious to be released; but the answer is, wait my time, and finish that thou hast to do. But in the interval, is there not often given, more close communion with God, more precious influence of the Spirit, a diminished hold by the world, more fellowship in heaven, more meetness for the inheritance of the saints. The ministering spirits may be more busy, and the soul may have higher and holier hopes, and desires, till at last it can say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The prayer of impatience, under tribulation, the desire to flee away, and be at rest, we do not expect to be granted. A request to be released from the evils of life, sooner than is good for us, is not in accordance with the will of God. But there is good reason to believe, that the desire to be with Christ, springing, not from the pressure of affliction, but from a longing for the glory in heaven, and the full sanctification of the soul, will, through the Mediator,

be listened to, and if not satisfied immediately, such support, and such supply of grace, shall be given, as comfort the soul, under delay. Let those who have this strong desire to be removed, live more in heaven, whilst here ; endeavour to finish the work, which, so far as they can judge, is given them to do ; seek more earnestly, the gift of the Spirit ; study to dwell more in and with Christ ; and to be influenced more by the principles which animate the inhabitants of paradise, and, then, the prayer is more likely to be heard, if uttered faithfully and resignedly, and not in weariness or discontent.

FRAGMENT XXII.—THE HOUR OF DEPARTURE.

No one, till the awful hour arrive, can conceive the feeling of the soul, on the eve of leaving this world, and meeting with the Judge. That meeting cannot be avoided or delayed. No friend can accompany the spirit, no intercessor can plead for the soul, when it stands in the presence of the Almighty. The day of intercession is past. The hour of judgment has come. The righteous, are presented in peace and acceptance; the wicked are beyond the blessing of mediation. This is, indeed, a solemn instant, for, there is only one instant between time and eternity, between the last breath, and the final doom, the unalterable state through eternity. It would be well to look forward to this period, with deep thoughtfulness, and to be assured, that sooner or later, slowly or suddenly, death will come. Our faith should be thus invigorated, our desires animated, so as to keep us closer with Christ, and more intimate with our departed friends. We cannot indeed see them, nor talk with them, but we can, in part, imagine their em-

ployment, and fancy somewhat of their joy. We may, in the same mind, though not with the same holy ardour, adore the Lamb, who was slain. We can continually look forward to a meeting with them, and to the time, when, like them, we shall be perfect, and enjoy the light of God for ever.

Some pass through the valley of death in peace, perhaps with joy, but many have much fear, contending with some hope. It is one thing to look forward to death at a distance, and quite another to meet it. The one, is often a picture of the imagination, the other, is a solemn reality. It is the end of all things here, and the commencement of an eternal existence. Who that has not been brought to the very gate of death, can conceive the feeling at this dread moment. The eye is to close on all things visible, and open, at once, in the land of spirits. The farewell is final to the world, and everything which engrossed the soul here,—another instant and time is no more. The honours, the riches, the pleasures, the attachments, cares, and anxieties, of this life, are as nothing, not worth one thought. Ah ! why do we wait, till a death-bed teach us knowledge ? Why do we, so often, peril our souls, for a passing vanity, pursuing a phantom, and neglecting an eternal reality.

Be he what he may, if consciousness remain, the dying man may, like Joshua, when entering on the promised land, see the Captain of the Lord's host, either for him, or against him, come, either to sustain and comfort, and protect the passing spirit, or, to recall to remembrance, former misdeeds, and withstand the guilty soul. He is not indeed visible, till the disembodied spirit have the veil withdrawn which hides eternity from time. But he is known to be present. His sustaining and cheering influence is felt by the dying christian, sometimes with much feebleness, sometimes with power and might.

FRAGMENT XXIII.—THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

“IN all their affliction, he was afflicted.” The journey of the children of Israel, is an allegory, representing our pilgrimage through life to eternity. They required much discipline, and many punishments to fit them for the promised land. These were necessary, and so is affliction to us. But we have not only a merciful, but a sympathizing High Priest, who feels for us, and afflicteth not willingly, neither doth he grieve the children of men. We may, therefore, be assured, that no affliction, either in kind or degree, will be laid on any disciple, that can be avoided.~ All are in mercy, and not one sent, without a tender feeling on the part of Jesus, who would spare, if it were possible. But, as he himself, refused not to drink of the cup, so, will he not withhold it from any of his people, though, still with the feeling, if it be possible, let this cup pass. We may take comfort from this, and be supported under suffering, by the knowledge, that he participates in our sorrow, and sends it as a proof of his love, and unalterable mercy. The angel of his

presence, saves his people in their affliction. It is not possible to analyze the effects of affliction, for these vary according to its nature, and the condition of the individual. In one instance, it removes a prop, on which we depended too much, and breaks the band which tied us too strongly to this world. In another, an idol that we worshipped, is taken from us. But why attempt to go through an endless catalogue, for man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward. In all, it is intended to wean us from this life and lead us to seek a better. It is to be received as a chastisement for sin, and a mean of grace leading to more watchfulness, against temptation, more love to God, a closer alliance with Christ, more intimate fellowship with the church above, and more consistency of conduct. The sorrows of the heart, lead to reflection, on the motive of the sender, recalling the soul from thoughtlessness and sin; and the uniform expression of every one, who receives its benefit is, "before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." There are more resignation, peace, perhaps joy, in believing, and a better preparation for death. Affliction which merely makes a sorrowful heart, and dissatisfies the soul with the world, or convinces it of its vanity and worthlessness, has done its work. It must

do this but it must also do more. It must be improved as a mean of sanctification, of raising the desires to heaven, and of elevating the heart to Him who dwells there. In temporal matters, when any thing is taken from us, and all supply exhausted, we naturally look round for another place. We depart from the desolation. So is it in spiritual matters. When deprived of the desire of our eyes, and the comforts of life, we, if blessed, turn to God, and look forward to a happier place. Affliction also makes us tender to others, and ready to aid them. The language of the heart is, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort whereby we ourselves are comforted of God." The exercise of this sympathy, and the offer to others of gospel consolation, soften the heart and prove a balm for the wounded spirit.

FRAGMENT XXIV.—LOVE TO CHRIST.

“WHOM having not seen ye love.” This is the test of true religion. He who loves the world, or any thing which it contains, more than Christ has much cause to lament. Too often, indeed, do earthly affections draw us from Christ, too often do we serve idols ; but, still, amidst all these blemishes, the fixed desire is, to love the Saviour. In proportion as we feel the necessity of his work and know its value, and feel how much has been done for us, will be our gratitude and love to Jesus. Though now we see him not, yet fully believing in his perpetual mediation, and Divine power to save, we rejoice, yet not always, to the same degree. Love and gratitude, for all his continued blessings, must ever abide, and rule in the heart, when we consider the greatness of his sufferings for our sins, his prolonged forbearance under all our waywardness, his unremitting intercession offered for us, notwithstanding our coldness, and even perversity. Surely, this Benefactor is worthy of love, and the desire to behold him, who hath so loved us, ought to be ardent.

It is, perhaps, only at the hour of death, that this love is stronger than words can express, or imagination conceive. The keen perception of our past sins, the magnitude of the danger, to which we have been exposed, but from which we have been rescued, the entire reliance on the perfect work of Christ, and a consciousness that he is present as a friend, must excite the warmest love, and affection, and gratitude. Less than one short hour, may usher us into the presence of that merciful Redeemer, and, with this prospect how does the soul rejoice in the hope of testifying, with pure and holy feeling, untainted by sin, or weakened by human frailty, her love and thanksgiving, for all the ways of mercy, by which she had been led, and for the full and eternal happiness, ready, yea instantly, to be bestowed. We never shall love Jesus fully, till we see, and feel in heaven, what he has done for us, for, till then, we cannot conceive the extent of his gift. He who feels here, that much has been forgiven him, the same loveth much. Love to Christ, and a desire to be with him, will be proportionate to the sense of obligation, and that, to the sense of sin. Were we not tied and bound here, our life should be one perpetual desire, not only to be freed from sin, but also to enjoy him who has delivered us.

FRAGMENT XXV.—A DESIRE TO DEPART.

“A DESIRE to depart and be with Christ.” Even in our earnest desire, to reach the mansions of the blessed, few concentrate their longings, in the single object of meeting Christ. It is, perhaps, at the end of life, and the near prospect of departing, that the desire of beholding Christ, and rejoicing with him, is most unqualified. There is associated with the hope of heaven, the prospect of again meeting departed friends, and the whole blessed company of the faithful, and the holy company of angels. This hope is not only natural, but proper, as animating our faith, and as a consolation, given by God himself. But this must not be paramount. If so, though we shall, at last, meet our dear and much loved friends, yet, that meeting may be postponed, till the soul, more earnestly look forward to the enjoyment of the Saviour himself. Jesus is the Captain of salvation, and with the Father, and the Spirit is the attraction in heaven. The society there, is indeed glorious, and the prospect of again rejoicing with our friends, and the spirits of the

just made perfect, a cheering cordial; but I doubt not, that in the moment of death, the absorbing thought is, that of seeing him, who loved us, and gave himself for us. This earnest paramount desire, to be with Christ, may be the last step in the preparation, even in an advanced, and, especially, a bereaved christian. Till this be implanted, the love of the creature, may be reigning with that of the Creator and Redeemer. There may be idols in heaven, sharing too much in our love.

There is a heart-rending grief, which cannot be described. The soul longs for deliverance, and for reunion with departed spirits. There is no murmuring at the will of God. There is resignation, there is a meek and childlike acquiescence, but with all this, there is a torn heart, with little around, which can console, or alleviate. The admonition, here, is to be patient. Patience must have its perfect work, if the sufferer be a christian. There must be no longing to depart. Though we look, with comfort, to the day of reunion, we do not impatiently desire to shorten our journey. Being led to a higher desire, to dwell with Christ, our anxiety is to be more firmly united to him, and, in his good time, to behold his glory in heaven, able to love and serve him, there, as we cannot do here. We trust to his mediato-

rial prayer, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory." The heart responds, and says, "whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none in all the earth, that I desire besides Thee."

A desire to be released from this life, produced by the weariness of affliction, and the disappointments of the world, will not, likely, be gratified, till more heavenly motives influence the mind. Heaven must be desired for itself, and for the full deliverance from sin, and for the presence of God, and of the Lamb; not as a refuge from suffering. Yet so mingled are our desires and motives here, that there is no cause for fear, because the one is partly mixed up with the other. Even the desire, to meet with departed friends must be, and, at last, shall be, subordinate to the wish to be with Christ.

FRAGMENT XXVI.—UNION WITH CHRIST.

“WE dwell in him, and he in us.” The union of the christian with Christ, is not a metaphor ; it is real and effective. It is not only an essential, but a most solemn, condition. “I in them, and thou in me,” “that they also may be one in us.” The words are wonderful. He not only dwells in us by his Spirit, but we are said to dwell in him. There is a true and perfect union. We are, as it were, identified with him, and he declares, that severed from him, we can do nothing. Oh ! were this truth, for truth it is, always before us, how different should be our thoughts, desires, conduct, and whole condition. We should, then, do in every thing, and at every time, as Christ would have done. We should be conformed, entirely, to his example. We should be blameless and holy. We should continually live with Christ, and for him, and by him. This happy and holy state is not to be attained here, though we strive after it, but it is to be acquired in heaven. “We shall be like him.” How much is com-

prehended in this assurance, and how ought it to stimulate us here.

But he is said to dwell in us. This is our security. If he dwell in us, we are safe; and is not this the final experience of every christian? Much as he has sinned, manifold as his errors, and frailties, and backslidings, have been, has he not been still led by the Shepherd, and kept within the fold, and, is he not, now, about to be received into the immediate presence of his Lord? Christ had our sin imputed to him; and, on the cross, as well as during life, he was viewed by God as bearing our iniquities. But as soon as he said "it is finished," sin was no longer imputed to him. This is the security of his followers, who dwell in him, and are one with him. Blessed state! sure ground of hope! Sin is no longer imputed to them, more than it is to him, but his righteousness is made theirs.

Jesus, after speaking to his disciples of their union with him, as branches of a vine, adds, that "as the Father loved him, so he loved them," and admonishes them to continue in his love, that is, to be loved by him. Then, he tells them that he had spoken these things, that his joy might remain in them, and their joy be full. This may refer either to Christ having joy in them, as he had love to them, or, that

the joy he had, might be participated in by them. In either case, the result was to be fulness of joy. This, I apprehend, is not to be fulfilled in this life, but completed in heaven, and gives a most exalted conception of the joy of the saints, even the joy of the human nature of Christ. The happiness and blessedness of the soul of the Redeemer, becomes communicated to the redeemed, by the Spirit dwelling in them. There is not only joy, but a fulness of joy, and, here is a test of character whilst on earth, for, if we desire not Christ, and his mind, and his holy joy, we are not his. No more powerful cordial can be administered to the weary pilgrim, than the ravishing prospect of entering into the joy of his Lord, not only into his presence, but into an actual partaking of his joy, even of the joy of Jesus.

FRAGMENT XXVII.—THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

“OUGHT not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.” The sufferings of Christ must never be unconnected with his glory, for, the one was the result, and the reward, of the other. The glory of Christ is his mediatorship, and the multitude of souls given to him, the ransom of sinners from everlasting misery, and their translation into ineffable bliss. Their eternal rejoicing, and continual praise, and thanksgiving, are glorious to Christ. He is, in his human nature, exalted far above all principalities and powers, and has a kingdom given to him, which shall never end. It is a kingdom of glory, a kingdom containing a multitude which no man can number, redeemed by him, and given unto him. He, there, “sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied.” It must, indeed, be a glorious, and wonderful reward, which can satisfy Jesus for his work, but it does so. He lives with, and reigns over, his people in heaven. This throng was redeemed by his blood, and preserved by his power, and now he shares his glory with

them, so far as it can be done. They behold his glory, and feel that it is his work alone, which brought them to this kingdom. They can say, this Saviour, is our Saviour. His glory, is our glory. Worthy is the Lamb to receive all the praise that we can ascribe. But, as his people partake of his glory hereafter, so must they partake in suffering here. He was made perfect through suffering, and so are his people. His sufferings were atoning, his people's are medicinal, and purifying. They are not the punishment of an offended Judge, but the kind and salutary correction of a loving Father.

FRAGMENT XXVIII.—DO THE DEPARTED KNOW
WHAT PASSES ON EARTH?

“THERE is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” There can be little doubt, that those who have left us, are still permitted to know what we do on earth. We have no positive authority on this point, but there is strong probability. “Wherefore, seeing we, also, are compassed about, with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run, with patience, the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.” This is a text which is considered dubious, in its support of this view. But the literal interpretation is innocent, and not improbable. The argument is, that we are under the observation of the inhabitants of heaven, and ought to be influenced by that consideration. Now, although the motive to abstain from sin, ought to be, simply, because it is hateful to God, and contrary to his commandment, yet we do know, that other influences do co-operate, under the help of God, to restrain us. Some, refrain because the eye

of their neighbour is on them. Some, because they would not wish to vex their friends; and some, perhaps, reflect that those beloved spirits, who are on high, are looking down upon them. It may be said, that such checks are not to be valued; that the recollection that the eye of God is on us, ought to be altogether sufficient, along with love to him, and abhorrence of sin. But, if it be allowable to hold communion, in idea, with the saints above, we cannot be wrong, whilst we join with them in praise, and rejoice along with them, in the sure mercy of God, also, with them, to desire to please God, and keep his commandments, and to avoid whatever can offend in heaven. In this frail state, we require every inducement to what is good, and every restraint from what is bad. Paul, mortified the body, to keep it in subjection. In truth, if we have our conversation in heaven, we must have fellowship with those who are there, and strive to form one family in Christ.

We are informed in general terms that the angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." This is both a solemn and a blessed thought, though we know not the mode of communication, nor are sensible of the service, which they are employed to perform.

FRAGMENT XXIX.—BLESS THE LORD.

“BLESS the Lord, O my soul.” Can one under pain of body, sickness, poverty, perhaps absolute want, desolate, and deserted, bless the Lord for all his benefits. Yes, if he be a christian. Many good things he may have received, but, even, if from his youth, upward, he have been a man of privation and distress, he can bless God for the unspeakable comfort of religion, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. He can do more, he can bless God for his very afflictions and sorrows, his wants, his pains, for he knows that any other state could not be good for him. It is the best state, and he is thankful. His desire is to understand, and benefit by it. He is taught, meekly, and sincerely, to say, Thy will be done, all things are well ordered for me. The mind rises above the body, and there may be more peace, more tranquillity, more real comfort, in this poor man, than in some around him, who have all the comforts of life, but not the same consolation and hope. But, if the poor and afflicted be called on to bless God,

surely, they, who, to the hope of salvation, have added, the comforts of this life, health, friends, and abundance, are inexcusable, if they do not offer, continually, their praise, and thanksgiving, and endeavour to honour God, in their prosperity, as their poor neighbour does, in his adversity. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion."

FRAGMENT XXX.—THE COMMUNION FOR THE
SICK AND DYING.

“WITH desire, I have desired to eat this passover, with you, before I suffer.” This was to be the last time that the passover could be celebrated, as a prefiguration. Christ was about to offer the real sacrifice, and, before suffering, he, in his human nature, desired to testify his confidence, in the efficacy, and acceptance, of his work. It was then, that he instituted the ordinance, which has superseded the paschal observance. It was just before entering on his sufferings, that he did so, and, assuredly, to his followers, there cannot be a more powerful cordial, and comfort, in the prospect of suffering, or of death, than the celebration of this sacrament. This has been, and till the end of time, shall continue to be, experienced by his people. Many, many, do in the public service, partake of this with a special view to the sufferings, and privations, about to be endured, or which have just been inflicted. Few, after the death of friends, neglect to avail themselves of the first opportu-

nity, and it is meet and right, to do so. But it is to the bed-ridden, and especially the dying, that this ordinance is peculiarly dear. Shut out from public ordinances, they, still, can have the blessing of the communion service. Jesus ardently desired to eat the passover for the last time, and, surely, we ought, "with desire," to partake of this ordinance, when on the eve of entering into eternity. There is no preparation more fitting, no mean of grace more appropriate, in that solemn hour, than the remembrance of the death and sufferings of Christ, for our sake, by the memorials he has instituted, and promised to bless. The devout spirit, just ready to wing its flight, may expect to experience more humble, yet lively hope, more love, more trust, more joy, in believing. I do not hold it to be essential, that the dying should join in the holy communion, but I do hold it as profitable, comforting, and a mean, if done in faith, of strengthening faith, increasing hope, and preparing for a happy transition.

But it is not to the dying christian, alone, that this is valuable. The sorrowing friends around, who, for the last time, are joining with him in this most impressive and blessed service, have their thoughts directed more to that heaven, to which the departing spirit is hasten-

ing. They have a livelier sense of the greatness of the Redeemer's love, and of their own utter helplessness, and hopelessness, without him. They feel, perhaps, as they never felt before, an ardent desire, that all present, may be one with Christ. There is more resignation, more aspiring after heaven, and towards the Saviour, who is there,—an unfeigned, and heartfelt desire, to say, "let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Some, who read this page, may be able to respond to all I have written, and to say, that they did receive strength and consolation, and were enabled to bear, what, before, they thought could not be sustained. By the grace of God, they experienced the truth of the promise, "as thy day is, so shall thy strength be."

FRAGMENT XXXI.—DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

“AND David said in his heart, I shall now perish, one day, by the hand of Saul.” The maxim of children is, sufficient for the day, is the evil thereof. Their wants, being provided for to-day, by their earthly parents, they expect the same to-morrow. We may, much more, trust our Father in heaven. Whatever is good for us shall be bestowed. We may, and ought, freely and fully to trust him, for, as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. In difficulties, we are apt to despond, and, when one calamity follows another, it requires strong faith to believe that all is, and shall be, well. But there is a sure promise to God’s children, that all things shall work for their good; nay, more, that all things are theirs, ready to be given to them, as best suits their case. As Christ possesses all, so his people have, in him, all necessary temporal blessings.

Few who have lived long, have not found, that in cases where the utmost effort has been made, to attain an important end, that has

failed, whilst, that very object, has been obtained by means, altogether, independent of the individual. Under most alarming, and apparently, hopeless circumstances, help has come, and protection been afforded as an answer to prayer. "Therefore, I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me." "Asa cried unto the Lord his God, help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee;" and the Lord smote the Ethiopians. But this same Asa, afterwards, relied on the king of Syria, and not on the Lord; "herein, said the prophet, thou hast done foolishly, therefore, from henceforth, thou shalt have wars." It had been well, if David had trusted, for supply, from God, instead of obtaining it, by falsehood, from Abimelech. He thereby caused the murder, by Saul, of fourscore and five priests, and of the men, women, children, and sucklings, in Nob, the city of the priests. Even the cattle were not spared, by that wicked man in his rage.

Even in the use of proper and appointed means, the success must be looked for from God. It is said of Asa, that "he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." Still worse is it, to neglect the interposition of God, and the efficacy of his providence, and go to unhallowed means. "Is it because there is

not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron ?”

But there are spiritual distresses, also, which lead the soul to say, that one day it shall fall by its enemy, and, especially, by that enemy which is within. The gospel, is a gospel of mercy, encouragement, and confidence. There is a promise, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” “I will heal thy backslidings; thy sins and iniquities, I will remember no more.” “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.” Christ himself, says, “keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” The whole mediatorial prayer, in the seventeenth chapter of John, is one continued ground of confidence. The whole Bible is full of promise and hope. The christian, trusts not in his own strength nor, in his own resolution, nor, on his own merits, but in the promise. Faith in the promise of God, is his ground of security. Bowed down by a sense of sin, and by the weakness of his nature, he still looks to Jesus, as his strength, and perfect Saviour. Oppressed, and saddened, by a consciousness of unworthiness, and of his manifold transgressions, he is apt to say, I shall one

day perish ; and, if God see fit, he may be left in darkness and sorrow, for a time, but the light and comfort of the Spirit, will one day revisit him. Humble confidence may precede peace and joy, and he fully experiences, that God is faithful and true to his word.

In spiritual comfort and prosperity, there may be the fear of falling away, and that times of darkness and declension may come. But here, also, there is a promise that nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ. He who began a good work will perfect it.

In temporal prosperity, there may be doubts and misgivings, as to its continuance, but the same assurance, which gives support in adversity, should sustain in the day of ease. So long as is good for us, it will be continued, and our object ought to be, so to use, as not to abuse it, so to receive, and employ, the bounty of God, as not to leave the sting of reproach, should it be withheld. Prosperity is more dangerous to the soul, than affliction, and, therefore, requires watchfulness and dependence on God, for his blessing and support. It ought to lead to as fervent and constant prayer, as sorrow and infirmity, for the pleasing cup, is apt to contain an intoxicating draught. In prosperity, or adversity, in wealth or poverty, the

wisest course is, faithfully, to discharge the duties of the present hour, and trust the future to him who ruleth over all. How melancholy to see man engrossed in adding to his store, without one thought of the Giver, or of the purpose for which it is given. Many, heap up riches, and know not who shall inherit. Many, are bent on accumulating wealth, and, in one day, it is swept away from them. Many, deny themselves, and others, the blessings it is meant to confer, and, after all their toil and care, are nothing better than the poor, who had barely food and raiment. To such, the message may be on its way, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, and then, whose shall these things be?"

In heaven, there must be the full conviction, and blessed feeling, that each soul is as much the object of the Saviour's love and superintendence, and special government, and holy communications, as if no other soul existed. He is infinite, and omnipotent, and the soul can say, he is my Redeemer. Why should it not be so on earth? Why should we not have firm faith in his promise, unreserved reliance on his protection, unequivocal and unalloyed acquiescence in his will? It is because we are not yet perfect in holiness, or strong in faith.

FRAGMENT XXXII.—WAIT GOD'S TIME.

“COMMIT thy way unto the Lord. Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.” The evil of neglecting this advice, is seen in the history of Jacob, who, by taking his own way to accomplish his desire, became a wanderer from his father’s, and was subjected to deceit and hardship, in his uncle’s house ; had severe affliction in his own family, and that, in one prominent instance, by the deceit of his own sons, who persuaded him that Joseph was slain. There was an assurance given to his mother, that her eldest son should serve the younger ; but neither she nor Jacob waited for the hand of God. It had been well for both, had they trusted in the God of Abraham. Jacob’s conduct to Esau, in the purchase of his birthright, was not fraudulent, but it was harsh and selfish. That of Esau, is declared to have been profane. For a mess of pottage, he sold his birthright, the most valuable part of which was, that the Messiah should come from him. There was however in this transaction, an open and regular agreement. But,

in the subsequent blessing, bestowed by Isaac, and intended for Esau, his first-born, there were craft and falsehood, and he was punished for these. But he was forgiven by God, doubtless after repentance, and although, he had much suffering, yet, was he guided and protected in his pilgrimage. On his departure, his father confirmed to him the blessing of Abraham. The benefit of the birth-right would appear to be the promise made to Abraham, "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," perhaps, also, the ultimate possession of the land of Canaan, that he might be multiplied, and inherit the land. This he had already purchased, and, in the blessing of Isaac, there is no mention of spiritual benefits. The blessing related, distinctly, to supremacy and temporal gifts, but there is no doubt, if we look to the blessing of Abraham, that these were to be connected with the possession of the spiritual gift. Esau did not care for the latter, and Jacob had been promised the former, and ought to have waited God's time and way, for its accomplishment. The history is instructive. It teaches trust and dependence on God, and reliance on his promise, in every state and condition. It warns us against all undue, and even hasty, endeavours to acquire, what, in itself, may be desirable. Had Jacob waited,

he was sure of the fulfilment of the prophecy uttered before his birth, and should have saved himself from much suffering, and doubtless from much remorse. It seldom happens that temporal punishment for sin, is remitted to the christian, but he is able to say, "in faithfulness hast thou corrected me." There is in the history, not merely warning, but also much encouragement to every christian. We find, during the very first night of his pilgrimage, that God appeared to him, confirming the blessing he had obtained. No upbraidings, no chiding. The pardon was full and free, and a promise was made. "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." It is even so with us. We have gone astray, and followed, too much, the devices and desires of our own hearts, but still we are forgiven and preserved, and hope to be conducted to the promised land.

FRAGMENT XXXIII.—THE DYING CHRISTIAN.

“THE God which fed me all my life long, unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.” “And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost.” The death-bed of a good man, who for a long life has been serving God, is a solemn, and in many respects a happy place. Of it, how awful the thought, may be said, “this is none other but the house of God, this is the gate of heaven.” If relations and friends, be spared to surround him, and the mind of the dying christian be acute, he, often, bears testimony, to the goodness and mercy of God, and though he cannot prophecy, he yet gives his general advice, and entreaties, to fear God, and trust in him, and enforces these by his own experience. He invokes a blessing on his descendants, and encourages them with the hope of protection here, and a happy meeting with him hereafter. It is not however, to be supposed, that those who die a silent death are not as fully united to the Lord.

It is not given to every one to glorify God, in the waters of Jordan, or, to rejoice, and give thanks, so as to edify those around them. But, the inward thoughts, are those of love to God, and humble faith in the promise and work of the Redeemer. The end may not be in songs, but it is in peace and quietness. There is, I doubt not, often more humility, more exclusive reliance on Christ, in such a case, than when more is spoken. There is, perhaps a clinging to self, even in the last hours, which leads one to talk of his own experience. Yet let me not be mistaken. Many are freed from this, and with genuine and unalloyed love, die exclaiming, glory, glory, glory. The soul ascends to heaven, and, who can tell what angels may be waiting. But Jesus himself is present. The translation of Elijah may be an intimation of the splendour of the transition from time to eternity. Could we see what in the twinkling of an eye, is beheld by the soul, we might indeed exclaim, "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." We are, or ought to be grateful for the blessings of life, but are too apt to overlook the blessing of death, though that is, expressly, said to belong to the christian. The disconsolated and broken-hearted sufferer, in the midst of his affliction, may call on death, as a relief

from present, without considering that it may be the prelude to future, and greater sorrow. Even the Christian who looks forward with calmness, perhaps with joy, to death, shrinks from the actual approach, when the time is come. But this fear is overcome, and, to him, death is an unspeakable blessing. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying, write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

FRAGMENT XXXIV.—CONSTANT PRAYER.

“HIS Spirit that dwelleth in you.” “Praying, always, with all prayer and supplication, in the Spirit.” “The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” We cannot pray as we ought, excepting by the Spirit of Christ. Constant prayer, is constant intercourse with God. In the midst of business, in the hours of relaxation, and pleasure, in the time of affliction, in all and every condition of life, or progress of the day, the aspiration of the heart ought to arise. No better mean of grace can be resorted to, than being instant in prayer. One short ejaculation, one single word of thanksgiving, one supplication for mercy, will ascend through the Spirit of the Mediator. There is, as far as I know, no unequivocal instance, in scripture, of prayer to the Holy Spirit, as an individual. Is this because the Spirit is the agent in prayer, as in all other acts, connecting us with God? The Redeemer on earth, had the Spirit without measure. It was through the Eternal Spirit, that Christ offered himself, with-

out spot, to God, on the cross. The subject is mysterious. In the hour of death he was forsaken, and had no comfort from his Father, for he was a substitute for sinners. But, when he could say, that the work was finished, he again received the joy of the Spirit, and gave up the ghost. By the same Spirit, he was quickened after his burial, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven, to present himself there, as our perfect mediator, and high priest before the throne of God.

FRAGMENT XXXV.—KIND AFFECTIONS.

“BE kindly affectioned one to another ; be tender hearted.” It is the advantage of christianity, that, whilst, the performance of the relative duties is beneficial to others, it is no less so to ourselves. The kind and generous disposition inculcated, is not only to the comfort of others, but even, in a greater degree, to its possessor. Our happiness or misery, depend, much more, on what is within, than what is without. Those who are surrounded by temporal comforts, and, perhaps, the objects of envy to others, are often much more unhappy, than the poor and afflicted. Nothing contributes more to cheerfulness and tranquillity, than universal benevolence, and kindly feelings to others. There is no root of bitterness, but, in proportion as the principle operates, will be the inward peace and comfort of the heart. Christianity is not a religion of gloom. The social affections are encouraged and sanctified. The christian can take part in the joys, and pleasures of the youngest around him, and indulge in the innocent recreations of life. But sinful pleas-

ures, he shuns; dangerous scenes, he withdraws from. Still, in all domestic enjoyments, he is ready to take a part, and to promote the pleasure of all about him, of those of his own age, but, specially, of the young. The world itself, can judge of such a one, and can see a beauty in the christian character. How happy the man himself, with a heart full of generous feelings, and open to the reception of every kind sympathy. Whose placid smile, and benevolent countenance, and cheerful playfulness, endear him to all, and make him be received as a blessing wherever he goes, beloved and esteemed by all who know him. Such a man I have known. Not so with the churl, who mars every enjoyment. He may be a good, but he is a sour man, and has not attained to the blessing, and grace, of cheerfulness, and brotherly love.

FRAGMENT XXXVI.—CHARITY WITH ALL MEN.

“CHARITY thinketh no evil.” Many should be shut out from heaven, if judged by men. We lay down limits and demarcations, and know not the heart. There may be a work of grace going on, that the world knows nothing of. Many have love to Christ, and faith in his redemption, who are out of the pale of sects, and unfettered by rules, laid down by poor fellow-mortals. Many may be surprised to meet, in heaven, those whom they excommunicated on earth. Perhaps, some who have mourned the death of a brother, a parent, or a child, with little hope, and no assurance, of their safety, may be greeted, first of all, by them in the regions of bliss. Faith and hope, shall soon cease to be required, but charity abideth for ever. It is in full perfection in heaven, and why not cultivate it here? Why not cherish it toward all mankind? How much bitterness, and discomfort do we experience, from want of this grace! How trifling, the causes of animosity, coolness, envy, and grieving. Even in this life, before its close, we often

see their insignificance, and our folly, in quarrelling about what we, at last, discover to be a trifle. Were we to estimate the things of this life, as we ought, and as they deserve, and look forward to full communion with our fellow spirits, we should be happier here, and better prepared for bliss above. Many of the blessings, and comforts of friendship we put from us, till too late. Many harsh thoughts, unkind words, perhaps acts, we would gladly recall, if we could. But that may not be. Yet this, by the grace of God, we can do: we can endeavour, in future, to live more like christians, more in accordance with the precepts of the Bible, more in resemblance to Christ, and to the saints, who are dwelling with him, free from evil passions, and full of peace and joy.

FRAGMENT XXXVII.—THE SECOND DEATH.

“THIS is the second death.” To the righteous, death is the last blessing bestowed in time. It is an entrance into the true life, and, amidst the pangs of the survivors, there is the support of believing, that the departed spirit has gone to his God and Saviour. But there are cases where there may be many doubts and fears, perhaps, no reasonable hope. Fain would I draw the number of the last, into very narrow limits, but there are cases, too plain to be mistaken. I would not recall to those who may have experienced the agony occasioned by the loss of a dear friend, in such circumstances, their feelings, were it not urge the necessity of improving the remaining opportunities, of admonishing and entreating surviving relatives, to seek the one thing needful, and not to allow, from false apprehension of doing the body harm, or of distressing the mind of a dying friend, that friend to remain uninformed of his situation, or to withhold from him the offer of mercy and peace in death. It must be a sorrowful thought, that during the heyday

of life, not one word was said, to lead the mind to think of eternity, and that, even in the last hour, not a single hint was given, to prepare for the coming judgment. The soul at this moment, is still in the place of hope: in less than an hour, it has gone to be judged. The writer of this, has parted with many beloved friends; but, thanks be to God, he has been spared the agony of believing, that any of these have been lost. The cup of affliction is, at all times, bitter, but, with the addition of the dreadful ingredient of doubt, of the safety of the departed; it is—I know not how to end the sentence.

FRAGMENT XXXVIII.—MISCONDUCT OF FRIENDS.

THE loss of friends, fortune, or health, one or all, is ill to bear ; but to a parent, and especially a christian parent, the knavery, dishonesty, or intemperance of children, are still greater evils. With a blasted character, and dissolute habits, what must become of them here, but what must be their lot hereafter. Yet many, not merely amongst those who have neither prayed with, nor for, their children, and have done nothing for their eternal interest, but, also, amongst those, who, to the best of their ability, and, in fervency of spirit, have endeavoured to train them in the good way, are subjected to this calamity. In most other afflictions, something can be offered as an alleviation ; but here it is unalloyed anguish. No earthly friend can give comfort or consolation. Yet, even in this overpowering sorrow and vexation, God does not forsake his servant. He knows what is good for him, and that this, is the very affliction, which is suited to the end in view and most likely to promote his spiritual benefit. No other could serve the

same purpose. He is led to greater watchfulness over himself, more leniency to the faults of others, more earnest, and frequent prayer, for his family. Cast off, as it were by them, he lives more with God, or, if there be only one prodigal, in his house, he is grateful for the kindness of the rest, and comforted by their religious character. He has submission to the will of God, and confidence in his goodness and mercy. The affliction is good for his own soul, and for those around him. He can say, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation, and all my desire."

FRAGMENT XXXIX.—RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons.” There are many events, which we are certain must happen, but, of the exact time, we are ignorant. The restoration of the Jews, is one of these. Their present preservation, and future return, are both miraculous. They were originally under the government of God, or Christ, as their King, but, in seeking for another, they rejected him. Jesus was, and still is, the king of the Jews, and whenever they acknowledge him as such, he will lead them to their own land. No one, at present, alive, may see this, but it is both pleasing, and profitable, to look forward to it. From our earliest years, we have been intimate with the history of the children of Israel, and the most solemn and important event, which ever took place, is interwoven with them, and with us. They are now suffering for their sin, in rejecting the Messiah. But, one day, they will look on him, whom they pierced, and acknowledge him to be their king. It does not appear, that this is to be a very slow process, affecting fa-

mily after family, at various and protracted intervals; but rather, that it is to be, comparatively, rapid and extensive. We are told, that it is to be at a period of great suffering, probably of persecution, which may be the mean of taking the veil from their eyes—"a time of trouble, such as never was, and at that time, thy people shall be delivered." It is not probable, that they shall regain possession of the land, without much opposition. It appears, that there is to be a great conflict near Jerusalem. "When I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down into the valley of Jehosaphat, and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Whether the Jews shall go, all at once, to retake their possession, or, whether a portion, only, shall first fight the battle, and the rest follow, cannot affect this promise. They shall all be gathered. "I will sift the house of Israel, among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet, shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." God will be sanctified in them, in the sight of many nations, and says, "I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them. They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant; and, my servant David, shall be their Prince for ever." They shall once more be

settled in Canaan. The gospel shall prevail; the Gentile nations shall be converted; their fulness shall take place. If the fall of the Jews, be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness. In every country, kingdom, or city, where a Jew dwells, there will be an effort made, to assist him to the land of his forefathers. "They shall bring your brethren for an offering to the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and upon mules, and swift beasts, to my mountain." In that day, shall be one universal stir amongst the people, one extensive and simultaneous effort, to get the Jews to Canaan, from every part of the world, where they were scattered. The language is not figurative. The prediction is to be taken literally in the assistance given, though not so, in every expression of kindness and approbation; as for instance, "ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." We are animated by this prospect. We are stimulated, even in the present day, to assist in spreading the gospel, and promoting the cause of Christ. As we would delight to witness, and enjoy, this prosperity of the church, so, we dwell upon it, and endeavour, in our

own minds, to anticipate it. It is a pleasing picture, which soothes in time of trouble, and comforts amidst present gloom and disappointment. The hand which now rests on the land itself, shall then be removed. Green pastures shall reappear, the vine and the olive flourish, and Canaan be once more blessed of the Lord. Both Jew and Gentile, will look on Calvary, as the glorious spot, where the Messiah finished his work.

The church at Jerusalem, will be a manifestation of the accordance of the Old and New Testament Dispensations. The Jew, will read Moses and the prophets, with understanding, and see the types and figures, fulfilled in Jesus. The Gentile, will see the value of the ordinances, and sacrifices of the Jews; and both, with one heart, will magnify and bless the God of Israel. The going up of the nations, from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles, a feast of thankfulness and rejoicing, commemorative of the spiritual ingathering, and of the protection, in the tents in the wilderness, is figurative; but, doubtless, there will be a peculiar blessing on the church in Canaan, and a special delight in its services. From this earthly triumph, we elevate the thought to a higher triumph, and a more glorious church in

heaven. There, the Redeemer is, evermore, ordering all things, for the glory of Jerusalem. But this happy period, of the church on earth, is not to last. "Gog and Magog, in number as the sand of the sea, shall go up on the breadth of the earth, and encompass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, and fire shall come down from God out of heaven, and devour them." For the faithful, there is a sure deliverance, but, a fearful retribution for the wicked.

FRAGMENT XL.—SELF DECEPTION.

“THE poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb.” None can read this parable, without sharing in the indignation of the king of Israel. The heartless cruelty, and selfishness, of the rich man, the utter bereavement of the poor, of his only comfort, the affectionate animal, which did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him as a daughter, justified the anger of David, who little thought at the time, that he himself had done worse. The heart is deceitful, the conscience often asleep, and self-esteem warps the judgment, and blunts the feelings. We can judge of others, but know little of ourselves. Some one who reads this, may be told of a man, who had received the greatest favour from a benefactor. Every gift which could make him happy, had been bestowed, he had been by him, delivered out of many calamities, life itself saved, at the expense of much hardship and suffering, by that benefactor, and kind friend, who, at last, died in rescuing him. Yet this man neglected him,

cared little for his character, his cause, or his friends ; nay, scarcely allowed himself to remember, that he had ever existed. Is not such a man, an object of contempt, and detestation. But, whilst such are the natural, and the just feelings, Nathan comes to this one reader, and says, "Thou art the man." He tells him of all that Christ has done for him, of his suffering in his behalf, his constant kindness, and unwearied offers of mercy. He tells him that Jesus still pleads, and says, "What more could I have done for thee?" and yet, in spite of infinite love, of entreaties, and warnings, and expostulations, the soul treats all with indifference, or says, "go away for this time, and at a more convenient season, I will send for thee." Can this be possible, with creatures endowed with reason or feeling? To treat the Saviour of the world thus, to neglect a salvation purchased at such a cost, and a rescue from danger, great beyond conception, is conduct that we should think, scarcely, required a visit from Nathan. But we are self-deceivers, we are in a deep sleep, the sleep of false security. We see the evil in others, but not in ourselves, and cannot believe that we are so blind, so ungrateful, so wicked, as to treat Christ thus.

The prophet comes with a message from God, to all, and under every conceivable cir-

cumstance. He tells, of the distress and grief occasioned by harsh, and unguarded, words, or unkind acts, by thoughtless, or improper conduct ; that some had only one comfort left, and that was destroyed ; one tender point, and that was wounded ; one innocent desire, and that was denied. He goes through the whole catalogue of sins and follies, of neglect, and asperities, and through all the varied scenes and conditions of a family, or individuals, and when the listener least expects to be convicted, says, "Thou art the man." He may come, when reparation may still be made, when reformation may still avail ; but, he may also come, when the injured one has gone beyond his reach, or left, for ever, those sorrows and vexations, he now regrets, that he ever inflicted. It would be well to receive a visit from Nathan, the prophet, morning and evening, and, with sincere prayer, to examine faithfully, and deeply, the thoughts of our hearts, and the errors of our ways, and so to improve by the past, as to lead in future, to greater watchfulness, and more christian feeling, and more high estimation of the work of Christ.

Tell of a man, who has found an inexhaustible treasure, a store of everything which is good, but, that though sufficient for all, he has kept it to himself, and left his fellow creatures

in want, and what do we say of his selfish cruelty. Ah! Nathan, Nathan, thou art coming to say, "thou art the man." Do we not act thus, when, partaking of the riches of Christ, we make not one endeavour to render others partakers also. We will not utter even a single word. We see them proceeding, in thoughtlessness, and carelessness, and in open sin, and yet tell them not of a Saviour's love, and the hope of heaven. Shame on us. Oh that Nathan may add, "the Lord hath also put away thy sin." The remaining time is short, God grant that we may do more for him, during the rest of our pilgrimage.

FRAGMENT XLI.—FORGETFULNESS OF PUNISHMENT AND OF MERCY.

It is too often, only, when we are cut off from all other hope, that we come to God; and, even after all his benefits, when the hour of danger, and distress is past, and when relief has been afforded, how apt are we to forget the lesson read to us, our promises, our feelings of gratitude at the moment, and to withhold our reasonable service. There are few conditions, which require more watchfulness, or, more constant prayer, than the warm sunshine of prosperity, after the clouds and storms of adversity. The very return of temporal peace, and comfort, after trouble, is apt to lead the mind back, from God, to the world. It is to cure this distemper of the soul, that afflictions are reiterated. When the effect of one is going off, another is sent to renew it, and some there be, who require them to be constant and extreme, before they make the soul cleave exclusively to God. It is in the furnace, that the christian learns most of his own heart, and feels most, the forbearance, and love of God.

He reads, with a personal commentary, the words, "nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and he remembered them for his covenant." It is the covenant, secured in Christ, which is our stay, and, when bemoaning our inattention, to past chastisements, and our returning fondness for the things of time, we may think of Hezekiah, who "rendered not again, according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was lifted up." Yet, though forgetful of his benefits, when he humbled himself, for the pride of his heart, the wrath of God came not, in the days of Hezekiah. We, too soon, forget the mighty hand of God, and, like the Israelites of old, serve other gods. We must not think, that we do not, like them, worship idols, for every unholy desire gratified, every sin indulged in, every falling down to the world, is idolatry. The gods of the ancients are still worshipped, though not personified by statues, or placed in gorgeous temples, erected to their service. This idolatry, we must abandon, and can only do so, by our hearts being made temples for the Holy Spirit. Let us remember our many deliverances from, and support under, affliction; our contrition under a sense of God's just displeasure; our desire at the time, to be one with Christ, and to live only to him, and for

him ; the thankfulness we felt for hope and comfort ; the estimate we formed of eternity, and the preciousness of that work, which gives to eternity its charms, and divests it of all its terrors. Alas ! how soon does the glow of prosperity act on the sinful heart ? How soon does the world put in its claim, and strive for the ascendancy. We, indeed, require to guard against the too frequent consequences of a return of comfort, or even a mellowing down of grief ; for, without much care, and earnest, constant prayer, the idols of this world will come again, and under every form, and with every wile, endeavour to seduce the soul to their service.

FRAGMENT XLII.—EXPERIENCE AND FORETHOUGHT.

THERE is no man, who, if he had it in his power, to live his live over again, and with the full recollection of all that had befallen him, would not so alter his conduct and plans, as to shun many errors, he had committed, and embrace many opportunities of success, which he had overlooked. This would be called, profiting by experience, and whatever benefit he derived, or whatever evil he escaped, he would attribute to the lesson, he had learned. This cannot be done ; but we may obtain much assistance, if we will, for the future. First, we may take a retrospect of our conduct and ways, and, minutely considering all that has happened, and the influence of each event, step, or variety of conduct, over our present condition, we have it, so far, in our power, to profit by this experience, as to shun the evil, and seek the good, and so alter the scheme, as to find, even past misfortunes, eventually, beneficial. Second, we may improve by forethought, which, in many instances, is equivalent to experience. I write not unadvisedly,

with respect to an Almighty, and overruling Providence, when I say, that he who plans most wisely, and who looks forward most carefully, to futurity, is most likely to gain his object.

If a retrospect be so useful in temporal affairs, or mental improvement, it is still more so in the christian course. It is well, in every stage of life, to look back, on all the dealings of God, with us. If we return to our early days, and mark the schemes and history of successive years, the many mercies we have received, the many interpositions of Providence in our behalf, the bearing of passing events, and of the companions of our youth, on our lives, we see a checkered scene ; but still can say, goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our life. The history of every man is important to himself, more so, than that of the most celebrated character. We often trace momentous events to causes, apparently, trivial, and perhaps the greatest blessings, to a painful providence, the health of the soul, to the sickness of the body. In reading our own history, we find much excitement to improvement, much cause for thankfulness, much ground for future trust, and present love. We endeavour to shun, and overcome, those sins or frailties, which have injured and bowed

us down. The nearer we approach the end of life, and the more isolated we have become in the world, the closer do we desire to draw to the unseen state, where there are neither changes nor sorrows, for, there is no pollution of the soul. The past is like a long dream. Its pains and vexations, its trials and temptations, are passing away. We are about to awake to a joyous and everlasting day. Here, we have often painful dreams, and can scarcely for a time, believe that they are not real. In them, we suffer as much, as if they were not mere fantasies of the imagination. If the vision be pleasant, it also vanishes on awakening. James, compares our life, to a vapour or smoke, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. It is like the mirage in the desert. The thirsty traveller sees a beautiful lake in the distance, the weary pilgrim, green and refreshing shades, and the dwellings of men. But as he proceeds, the illusion is dissipated. He is still weary and thirsty, his joyous expectation disappointed, his renewed speed has been vain. He is still far from his resting place. We shall, at last, look back on life as a vapour, be freed from its cares and disappointments, or, shall no longer be fascinated by its fleeting pleasures. We shall be surprised that we were so much taken up, by

its toys, or disturbed by its troubles. Both have passed away like a dream, but there is one thing which remains. Holiness or sin have been in it, and the one or the other, when we awake, we shall find to be still with us, and the real life to be determined by the dream.

FRAGMENT XLIII.—THE PEACE OF GOD.

“LET the peace of God rule in your hearts, and be ye thankful.” This peace is two-fold. It is peace arising from a sense of reconciliation through Christ, a well grounded hope of the forgiveness of sin, the love of God, and the blessedness of heaven. It is not peace from indifference, or thoughtlessness of the coming judgment, but peace from God himself. Another peace, is that arising from perfect accordance to the will of God, a cheerful acquiescence in all that he orders, and implicit dependence on his goodness and providence. Some, attain the first, who do not possess the second. They think that they can trust to Christ for redemption, but find it difficult to trust to him, for the things of this life. But he has given a promise of both. “Peace, I leave with you, my peace, I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” What says Isaiah, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.” What says

David, "Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." What says Paul, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Peace includes every blessing, for, with inward, perfect peace, there is no vexation, no fretting, or fear, no anxiety or repining. It is perfect, according to the similarity of the mind to the heavenly state, and in proportion as it can say, "thy will be done on earth as in heaven." Go over all the catalogue of the evils of this life, and, they are neither few nor small, and under these, there is peace; for, a friend is soothing, and sustaining, and convincing, that they are good and salutary. Take all the ills of life, and all the fears of futurity, still there is peace. Is not the peace of God, the persuasion that he is our friend, and perfectly reconciled to us. There is no enmity, we can rely, confidently, on the Almighty. Nothing can disturb or distress such a soul. It is in perfect peace. Happy state! It is the beginning of heaven on earth. Every thing is tranquil, every thought serene. All is good and right, and felt to be so. Whether there be prosperity or adversity, joy or affliction, there still is peace, for it is the will of God, and, his Spirit soothes, supports, and animates the mind. There is no disquietude.

The inward feeling, in every circumstance is, "it is God." This is true happiness, but how seldom is it enjoyed. How languidly do we aspire after this peace. How little do we foster it. Clouds obscure, and even storms assail the soul. There are frettings and grievings, fears, and apprehensions, restlessness and impatience, a whole host of troubles, under every form and degree. This should not be, if the peace of God were present. That must banish all, and every one of these, and, when this peace prevails, the language is "why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me. Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." To possess this peace, the soul must be fully sanctified, and it can only be perfect in heaven. But great, though not absolutely perfect, peace may be obtained here, and some there be, who have made so much progress, compared to others, that it may almost be said of them, that nothing can make them dismayed. Is not this a desirable state. Is not this happiness on earth. Is not this rising above this life, and all its plagues and troubles. Is not this walking with God, and not with man. But, is this sought after? Is this true peace earnestly desired? There is a promise of peace to the christian, aye, and of

constant peace, if he would only seek it. Faith, in the revelation of Jesus, accompanied with unwearied prayer and watchfulness, will obtain the promise. Peace, is not to be sought for, or expected, in the world, or the things of the world, or in, or from, the maxims of philosophy. It is the peace of God, which alone can rule the heart, tranquillise the mind, and make life, under any and every circumstance, happy. Were there perfect peace, there should be perfect happiness, were there perfect holiness, there should be perfect joy. Christian peace is not apathy, far less is it that deceptive substitute, produced by recourse to the cares or pleasures of the world, intended to divert the mind from present evil.

FRAGMENT XLIV.—IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE.

“THUS sayeth the Lord.” This is quite sufficient for our regulation. Whatever is commanded, must be obeyed. In general, the first dictate of conscience, is the most correct, and most unsophisticated. We ought to have no hesitation in our course, but faithfully, and strictly, and promptly, follow the path of duty, and the written law. Should we have any sincere doubt, we shall, in answer to prayer, hear an inward voice, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” All tampering and hesitation, and trying to reconcile inclination, with conviction, and sense of what is right, must be dangerous, and may be fatal. Well had it been for Balaam, had he obeyed the command, “thou shalt not go with them;” but he loved the wages of iniquity, and still desired to go. And what was the end of this man? “Balaam, also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword.” We have, also, a melancholy instance, of the effect of not obeying the distinct order, in the history of the man of God, who came out of Judah to Bethel, and prophesied

against the altar, and who was, peremptorily, commanded to eat no bread there, nor drink water, nor turn again by the way he came. Now, there dwelt an old prophet there, who, though not a righteous man, yet seems to have had, like many others, a respect for the true religion, without feeling its power. This man, hearing of the prophecy, went after the man of God, and by a lie, persuaded him to return and eat bread. We know the intimation he was compelled to give, and the punishment which ensued. The blood of the man of God, doubtless, rested on his head. We must not conclude, that the man of God was not forgiven, though punished here; but we read this lesson, that in all cases, the plain command must be implicitly obeyed, in spite of all false arguments and persuasion. The fault of this prophet, was in listening to man, and not asking counsel of God. Even had the story been true, he ought not to have believed it, without a communication from him who sent him. He forgot that the injunction was positive, and to him, unchanged. There is no ground to believe, that he wilfully disobeyed, but he allowed himself to be deceived, and suffered for it. We, have a plain and positive command, a definite offer of mercy, and must adhere steadfastly to the one, and unreservedly accept the

other. There is another individual, in this history, not to be forgotten, held up as a beacon to all generations. He is described as Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. And of the evil kings who succeeded him, it is said, "they walked in the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and in his sin, wherewith he made Israel to sin." This is a fearful distinction, and ought to be a warning to all, who by evil example, or wicked counsel, contaminate the society in which they are placed.

FRAGMENT XLV.—RESIGNATION.

RESIGNATION is a duty often difficult to practise, yet it ought not to be so. If we had full confidence in God, and felt that he did everything right, and in mercy, resignation, should be another word for thankfulness, and cheerful acquiescence. Resignation should be indeed, a resealing, or countersigning, to the appointment. There should be no desire to be rid of the evil, or pain, or disappointment. These, indeed, should not be felt to be evils, but received as blessings. In heaven, there can be no will, but God's will, and we can suppose no command given there, which will not be delighted in. There are neither resignation nor patience, as we explain these, required in heaven. These are duties of fallen creatures, under the evils consequent to sin. The nearer we attain to christian perfection, here, the more easy shall these duties be, or the less will be the call for them. But, alas! here we are frail and sinful. Resignation on earth, implies what cannot exist in heaven; a previous feeling of disappointment, or of suffering, or of

something we would wish to avoid, or be rid of. If we desire to resemble the inhabitants of heaven, and to find resignation and patience, superseded by contentment and satisfaction, we must pray, and strive to be able, to view God, as they view him.

FRAGMENT XLVI.—HOLY DAYS. GOOD FRIDAY.

THE Jews had their daily sacrifice, but they had, also, a high day, the Passover, the observance of which, if possible, was essential to their salvation. Christians have also their daily or weekly ministrations, but they, also, have a solemn anniversary to observe, the day of the death of their Lord. It may be said, that we have no command for this in scripture. True, but neither have we for the change of the sabbath, from the seventh, to the first, day of the week. Yet, christians, in all ages, have agreed in the observance of the Lord's day. Much may be said in favour of the commemoration of the nativity, and other remembrances in the ritual. The nativity, is a day of spiritual gladness, though often perverted into a day of thoughtless feasting. The commemoration of our Lord's death, on Good Friday, is a blessed mean of grace, productive of deep humility for sin, and fervent thankfulness for an all-sufficient sacrifice. We cannot go a pilgrimage to mount Calvary, and have our faith enlivened, and our affections exalted, by beholding the

place where our Redeemer was crucified. But we can, on this hallowed day retire from secular cares, and pursuits, and remember that it is set apart, for the special consideration of the sacrifice of Christ, our Passover. It may be said, that we should do so every day, and more especially, at every communion. True. But there is a peculiar service for this day, a special commemoration, an assembly of those who hope for redemption, for the purpose of remembering, more vividly, and intensely, the greatness of God's love, and the value of Christ's work. This is a day when we should feel, most deeply, the dreadful nature of sin, which required so precious a sacrifice for its atonement, most deeply our own sin, and personal interest in the ransom, most deeply, the sorrow and the suffering we caused to the Son of God, most deeply, the delusion, the criminality, the danger of, in any degree, or at any time, lightly esteeming this sacrifice, or, of indulging in sin, in the hope that grace may abound. We look, by faith, to the cross, and there, behold the Lamb of God, slain for us, hanging, in pain of body, but greater agony of soul, as our substitute. It was the sin of man, which brought him there. It was to save man, that he offered himself as a sacrifice. Oh! how bitter the suffering of the holy Jesus, when he was forsaken of his

Father, and in our stead drinking the cup of wrath. How awful, how hardened, the state of that man, who can contemplate this scene, without deeply feeling his obligation, and saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The unconverted sinner, may look on the forsaken Jesus, and see what his final state must be, if he meet God, without reconciliation through Christ. He may see, also, the strong hope, yea, certainty of mercy and forgiveness, if he will only come to him, who endured so much to save him. The offer of salvation is made to all. The efficacy of the work is infinite. The bleeding and suffering Saviour, is offering himself to every one. A voice from the cross, sounds in every ear, but if neglected, or spurned, by the folly, perversity, and obstinacy of man, what can be said against the justice of God, in condemning him, who has so lightly esteemed, the sufferings of Christ. A voice from the cross is heard by the penitent christian, words of mercy and peace. The Holy Spirit visits his heart, and with deep abasement, cordial gratitude, and ardent love, he falls down, and says, in thee, O Lord, will I trust.

When Jesus died, he abolished death for us. When laid in the sepulchre, he sanctified that, and made it a place of peaceful repose for his

people. When he rose, he went to prepare an abode for his redeemed, till the day of re-union with their bodies. On Easter, we commemorate his resurrection, and, on Ascension-day, his going up into heaven, to plead for us, and to guide and protect the frailest, and most erring disciple, in his journey through the wilderness of life. At the hour of death, he will be present to bless and to sustain, and to conduct the spirit to his kingdom of glory.

FRAGMENT XLVII.—FRUITLESS AFFLICTION.

SUFFERING is, invariably, dependent on sin. It is inconsistent with the character, and attributes of God, to punish or afflict an innocent being; but, even to guilty man, affliction is, in all cases, sent in mercy. To the careless, as a call for immediate consideration; to the wicked, as a warning to flee from the wrath to come; to the christian, as a mean of improvement, or admonition to be more conformed to his profession, more devoted to the service of his God. But it is too true, that in no case, does it produce that immediate and perfect work, which it is calculated to effect. In how many instances, is it altogether disregarded, in so far as its real end is concerned. It is either attempted to be relieved, by the substitution of new enjoyments, or to be obliterated, by care and business, or, put away, by some strong and persevering effort of the mind. Even if keenly, and long, felt, it may be unproductive of any spiritual advantage. The sufferer may not even attempt, or intend, to obtain such a benefit. It is in every possible way got rid of;

every mean used to forget, or escape from, the pain. This is, unquestionably, the case with many, who are suffering under the hand of God, and they are aided in this, and encouraged, by those around them, who, instead of offering christian consolation, and christian admonition, try, only to lead the sufferer from feeling his affliction, and in one way or other, to forget his sorrow. It is to those who are thus unmindful of the merciful object of suffering, that the admonition is given, once and again, in Scripture, "my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord." It is fearful to know, that deep, even agonizing affliction, sorrow upon sorrow, may be sent, and yet no improvement take place. But there are some, who, whilst affliction lasts, or, in the time of keen feeling, are willing to acknowledge the hand of God, and profess repentance. There may be reformation for a time, there may even be an improvement in the inner man, and a belief that it has been good for him, to have been afflicted. But as the poignancy of grief wears off, so does the apparent amendment. Even with the best, and most watchful, the influence is too apt to be weakened, whilst, of those who have felt the pain, without real benefit, it may be said, as under the severe plagues of Egypt, "when Pharaoh saw that

the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart." There is no incompatibility between transient humiliation, and, ultimate, despising of the chastening of the Lord.

Few attainments are more difficult to acquire, than a permanent remembrance of sufferings, and a steady perseverance in the resolutions it produced, with an abiding under the influence, it had, at first, on the heart and its affections. Were the benefit obtained, effectual and continued, there should be no new affliction required. But, in too many instances, though not despised, yet chastisement may not be fully, and beneficially, felt, whilst in others, through felt, and at first meekly received, its fruits may not have been cultivated. In such cases, the christian must expect to have such a measure given to him, as shall, ultimately, accomplish the end in view.

But there is another advice, coupled with the direction, viz., "nor faint when thou art rebuked of him," or elsewhere, "neither be weary of his correction." It is as necessary to endure patiently and profitably, as not to despise, or neglect the rebuke, or treat it with indifference. We not only must endeavour, by the grace of God, not to sink under the pressure, but, also, not to be impatient, or weary

under it, nor forget it, nor relapse into that apathy, and carelessness, from which affliction roused us. The lively effect produced at the time, on the soul, we fervently pray may never be obliterated. We daily recall the affliction, not in murmuring, but in earnest desire, to be more weaned from sin, and from the world. It is thus, that affliction "yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to those who are exercised thereby."

FRAGMENT XLVIII.—BURIAL SERVICE.

IN that bitter hour, when we consign the remains of a beloved friend, to the tomb, the solemn service of the church, is soothing to the broken heart. The confined body, has been shut out from our sight. We are, now, to end all earthly connexion, and can only know by remembrance. The necessary attendants have done their duty, heartless from oft repetition, but the mourner feels, that the grave is now receiving his beloved. As the heavy sound of the earth, thrown on the coffin, comes on his ear, he knows that all is now to be hid ; the former tenement of the soul, is laid in its resting-place. God, alone, can give, at this moment, sure and solid support. His Spirit comforts, with the hope, that the separation is to be but short ; that the departed soul has gone to the mansions of glory, and that we ourselves, are soon to follow. Without the consolations of religion, this last sad duty, could hardly be performed, or the grief sustained. Outward means are not essential to the end, but they are often blessed in their use, and as-

surely are befitting. When should prayer be offered more fervently, than at the grave. If the mind is ever to be softened, and prepared for the truths and comforts of religion, it should be at this time. The progress of sickness, the hour of death, have all been preaching to the mourner, and now is the conclusion. If the truth of the perishing nature of all our earthly enjoyments, is to be vividly and practically impressed, should it not be now? If the shortness of our pilgrimage, and the uncertainty of life, are to be impressed with influence, ought it not to be now? If the worthlessness of all worldly pleasures, and vanities is to be felt, should it not be now? If the importance of eternity, the dread of hell, or the hope of heaven, and the value of a Saviour are to be felt, it should be now. The agony endured at the moment of separation by death, is acute, but the grief at the grave, though of a different nature, is not less poignant. Without religion, how can this sorrow be alleviated, mellowed, or sanctified, how can there be resignation, how can there be hope. Blessed be God, even at this dread hour, there can be resignation, and patience, and hope, and peace, and consolation, and conviction, of the mercy of God in the deprivation. Even to a mere spectator, the service, devoutly performed, must be impressive,

and make a solemn call to prepare, to meet the last enemy. Listen to the solemn words of the priest, "O Lord, most holy, O Lord, most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death." "O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, in whom, whosoever believeth shall live, though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; who hast taught us, by his holy apostle St. Paul, not to be sorry as men without hope, for those that sleep in him. We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin, unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him, as our hope is, this our brother doth; and, that at the general resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing which thy well-beloved Son shall, then, pronounce, to all that love and fear thee, saying, come ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you, from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer, Amen."

It is now all over. The grave is closed. But there may be the bodies of many saints, rest-

ing there, till the morning of the resurrection. Their spirits are on high, and have been joined by him, whose body has, just, been deposited with theirs. One song of praise is uttered by all, one holy adoration offered, one ecstasy of joy experienced, and, doubtless, one kind and tender sympathy, for the mourners, yet, on earth. But they know, that their Lord is ordering every thing in mercy, and, that those who are weeping here, are soon to rejoice with them on high. The hope of this, possesses the soul of the bereaved, and with that solace he can, as he turns from the grave, say, "I will wait patiently till my change come."

FRAGMENT XLIX.—THE FAMILY PEW.

“WE took sweet counsel together, and walked into the house of God in company.” How affecting to join in the solemn service of the church, after having lost one who is dear. Former bereavements are, again, acutely felt, along with the present suffering. The books in the family pew, belonging to those who have been long, as well as to him who is, recently, dead, were here employed by them, in their earthly pilgrimage. Their voice of prayer, or of praise, is no longer heard. They have gone to a higher and a holier church. But to us the memorials are dear, and recall the time when we joined with them in the service of preparation, or followed in the steps of our fathers, who had been long gone. The heart melts with tenderness, when remembering the loss. The faltering voice joins in worship. The soul is sad and sorrowful, but not without comfort. The feeling is holy. The seat is indeed vacant, but the departed is singing the hymns of praise and thanksgiving in heaven. He is beholding face to face, that Saviour, who

was spiritually present, though unseen, in the earthly temple. There is but one church. Yet, how different here, and above. This is the church in the wilderness. That the church in heaven. Here, all is frailty; there, all is glory and strength. If any external circumstance can aid in the communion of saints, it is worshipping under the tender feelings, excited by the mournful remembrance of the dead. Memory is busy, and imagination raises again a vision of him who is gone, as if to force, more deeply, on the mind, the loss sustained, and raise it more effectually to heaven. We are more abstracted from the world, brought into closer connexion with eternity, and feel more immediately in the presence of God; more weaning from the world, and more identification with the host above: more abasement for sin, and more thankfulness for redemption. More dependence on Christ, and a firmer resting on him, as our only stay and comfort. More fellowship with the soul of the departed, and more conformity to the feelings in heaven. More earnest longing for deliverance from sin, and participation in the holiness of the saints, who have finished their course. More patience in tribulation, more fervour of spirit; a greater desire to serve the Lord. The mourner can often say, "This is none other but the house

of God, and this is the gate of heaven." There is a Saviour felt to be present, instructing by his Spirit, sustaining and comforting, and tenderly binding up the wound. Gracious Jesus, thy hand which smote, is here stretched out to heal, and revive, and cheer, the soul. That soul, even here, sorrowing in the temple, is, by his power, raised up to have conversation in heaven, and a view of the happiness of the general assembly of the just. For a moment, it may be midway between heaven and earth, and ready to say with Peter, James, and John, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

Those who have still friends, with whom they can worship in the sanctuary, should prize the blessing, and highly esteem the continued privilege, of uniting in the devotions of the church. A family cemented by christian fellowship, servants of the same Lord, hoping in, and waiting for, the same full redemption, is united by ties unknown to the world. It is bound together, not only by natural affection, but in christian love. This blesses prosperity, and soothes in adversity. Whilst making the same confession, offering the same supplications and thanksgiving, singing the same praises, and listening to the same word, there is a peace and a joy in the heart, and a comfort in the assured belief, that should one be

taken from the rest, and others follow, they are only called earlier home, to the abode of the Lord of all. Neglect of holy communion in families, is, assuredly, the loss of much comfort now, and it may be, of much solace hereafter.

FRAGMENT L.—OUR FATHERS, WHERE ARE THEY?

WHEN passing, at an early age, through the crypt of an old church, I heard the deep swell of music wafted to the ear, as the communicants were retiring from the table of the Lord. The words were not distinct, but the sound was solemnizing, for the praises of good men were rising to the throne. Of all, who were then joining in adoration, not one, even of those whom I knew only by name, whether clergy or laity, is now alive; I may truly say, "I only am escaped, alone, to tell thee." The song of Zion was, then, sung in their pilgrimage, but, now, the song of the Lamb is sung in heaven. There were doubtless, many that day oppressed with a sense of sin, bound down by bodily infirmity, afflicted and sorrowful. But now, all tears are wiped from their eyes. There is no more sin, and therefore, no more curse. The Saviour, whose finished work, they that day commemorated, and trusted to, has taken them to himself. He fed them here with his ordinances. He led them by his Spirit, and saved them with an everlasting sal-

vation. There are many, who, like me, can look back on a worshipping assembly, and say, that all whom they knew have gone before them. They only are left. Of our contemporary friends, one after another is departing. The messenger is daily coming, and with every new message a friend disappears, till at length, if we be not also called, our associates are but of the standing of a day. We have been obliged to form new friendships, or to remain lonely and solitary, like a blighted tree. Surely, this should loosen the hold the world has on us, and our tie to the world. Day by day, we should be more ready, for every day is bringing the messenger nearer. How soon, or by what path, he may arrive, who can tell?

FRAGMENT LI.—IT IS FINISHED.

"It is finished." Jesus came to save sinners, and he accomplished his work. He did not yield up his soul, as soon as he was lifted up on the cross. For six hours he hung there, as a sacrifice for sin. He endured the wrath of God, as our substitute. He had, during life, obeyed the law in our stead, and he, now, bore our punishment. At length, when justice was satisfied, and the agony of desertion over, he cried with a loud voice, It is finished. By his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven, we have a sure testimony, that the work was perfect, and its end accomplished. All that we require has been procured. There is nothing more left to desire. He who feels the heavy burden of sin, may look to the cross, and have that removed. He who dreads its punishment, may look and see it, already, inflicted and endured. He who is arraying his transgression before his eye, may see all wiped away. He who has nothing to offer in his own vindication, may see a full acquittal. He who has no claim for mercy, may see mercy offered

freely, an inexhaustible fountain of mercy flowing. He who may, with Paul, be saying, that he is the chief of sinners, has a Saviour and Protector. He, who is entangled with many cares, and bowed down with many sorrows, sees the Redeemer forsaken, that he might not be forsaken. He, who is approaching the last enemy, sees that enemy vanquished. The work is complete, for every state and circumstance of the soul. Christ, "by one offering, hath perfected, for ever, them that are sanctified." He has entered into the holy place, having obtained redemption for us.

But, in considering the termination of Christ's sufferings, we must attend to our own lives. As Jesus is our great example, and as we are united to him, we, like him, must perform our work till it be finished. We have a work to perform, and it must be faithfully done. He obeyed the will of God, till that will was accomplished. We must also obey, and fulfil our duty. We must be patient and persevering, and, under every trial, every vexation or affliction, under the burden of sin, or the infirmity of the body, we must look to Jesus, "who became obedient unto death," and "for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." The same mind which was in Christ, must, in all respects, be in us

also, and therefore we despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked. The cup given us to drink may be bitter, bitter indeed, but we drink it, for it comes from God, and is to us a mean of grace. In every circumstance, and situation of life, we remember that Jesus went on, till he could say, "It is finished." When we are ready to be taken away, our warfare over, the last battle fought, we can say, it is finished. It is finished, so far as our safety and acceptance are concerned. It is finished, so far as temptation and sufferings are concerned. It is finished, so far as probation and preparation are concerned. It is finished, so far as time, and the course of time, are concerned. Supported by Jesus, we, with joy and confidence, bid adieu to all that is here, and enter into the blessedness of eternity.

There are many christians in deep despondency, overspread by a "darkness which may be felt." Let them remember that Jesus experienced a greater gloom of soul, when, for them, he was forsaken of his Father. But, as joy revisited him, so shall light arise on the sorrowful christian. Let him trust in the faithfulness of God, and be assured, that this sore depression is necessary for him, and is to be endured as a trial of faith. Much may arise from

the bodily frame, or constitution, but still the distress is the same. But there is encouragement, for if there were no desire for Christ, no dependence on his work, no anxious desire to hear him say, It is finished, there should be no deep anxiety or despondency, under doubts and fears. These should give little trouble, if they existed at all. The very horror of this distress, is an evidence that the soul is not dead, nor finally forsaken. Jesus felt what it was to have his Father's presence withdrawn, and in his sympathy, and mercy, will send relief.

FRAGMENT LII.—THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

WE visit the grave of a departed friend, with the vivid recollection of all that is past. If that friend had suffered much, and endured long affliction, we feel that his sorrows are ended ; grief is buried with him. If we have received many benefits, and innumerable kindnesses, and unremitting watchfulness and affection, we, at the hallowed spot, have the heart filled with love, and gratitude. Tears of blessing, mingle with those of sorrow. We cannot visit the Saviour's tomb, nor, were we on the spot, could we see the sepulchre as it was. But we can transport ourselves there, by imagination, and can hear the voice of the angel, saying, "He is risen ; he is not here ; behold the place, where they laid him." Few invitations can be more profitably accepted, for in no frame of mind, no act of life, can we be more benefited.

Is faith strong, is hope steady, is peace granted, we come and see where he lay, who is the author and finisher of that faith, the

foundation of that hope, the source of that peace. We look into the sepulchre, and see that there, once, lay the body of him, who was sorely afflicted, and mocked, and reviled, and scourged, and crucified, for our salvation. We keenly think of what Jesus endured, before he was laid there. We imagine, that under all the pain he suffered, and the contumely he met with, we hear the agonizing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." His sufferings now are ended. His lifeless body rests in peace, and beyond the power of man, till the appointed hour. It was for us, and for our transgressions, that he finished his painful work, and that the Lord of life submitted, for a season, to the dominion of death. Who can, with the mind's eye, look on this sacred spot, this consecrated tomb, without deep abasement for the share he had, in bringing the Saviour there, and unutterable love and gratitude, for the salvation purchased at a price so great. Looking back on this solemn scene, we almost feel, as if we had been present, and stooping down, seen the linen cloth left by the risen Redeemer. Such views are blessed views. He who lay there, is now on high, pleading for us, and watching over us. He who, before he was laid there, endured so much sorrow and agonizing suffering,

is exalted as our Prince. To him, we are indebted for all the means of grace, and the hope of glory.

To the thoughtless, and indifferent, the angel says, "Come, see the place, where the Lord lay." See how much was done for thee. See the danger of sin, and learn the sure punishment, which shall follow the continued neglect of the sufferings of him who lay there. If you had been a thankless, prodigal son, could you stand over the grave of a forbearing, kind, indulgent Parent, without bitter remorse for your own misconduct, and deep gratitude for his dying blessing. But, here is displayed more than human love; you have been rebellious, and opposed to the Lord of Hosts, your Maker, and yet you see here, the greatness of his love, in giving his Son, to die for you. Jesus lay here for your sake. He calls on you, by his Spirit, to come and see how much he did for you, and how much he is still willing to do. Oh! look into the sepulchre. It is indeed empty, but not the less affecting. You behold not the body of the Lord, but you see where they laid him. Think of his kindness, his infinite love. Listen to his tender expostulation, "why will ye die?" The Spirit speaks in his name, tells you of all that he did, and all that he suffered. He entreats you to look

into the tomb, now empty, and to believe that Jesus is on high, as your atoning sacrifice, and interceding Priest.

To the sorrowful in heart, to the desponding disciple, the angel says, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Jesus lay there for you. For you he endured the cross, and for you he left this mansion of the dead. For you he lives in heaven. He sends his Spirit to you. Trust in me, and be saved. Be not faithless, but believing. It is good for you to be in the present tribulation; but I am with thee, and in my time I will deliver thee. Look into the tomb, and see where the Redeemer lay. Take comfort, from the sure hope, that he, who for you submitted to death, will not abandon you. He has a fellow feeling for you, and, though darkness may be over, and around you, it is but for a season. The tomb is empty. The Saviour lives to bless and preserve you.

To those whose heart is breaking, as they deposit the remains of a beloved relative in the grave, the angel says, "Come, see where the Lord lay." The tomb, though dark and silent, is not a place of dread, or aversion. It is sanctified, and blessed, to God's people, for Jesus lay there. He hath abolished death. He is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. His people are safe, and

can say, O grave, where is thy victory. When the Captain of their salvation was made perfect, through sufferings, he rose in triumph. "Death hath no more dominion over him." Look into the sepulchre, and believe that "we shall also live with him," and in reply to the angel, let the mourner say, both for himself and his friend, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "Though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet, in my flesh shall I see God." Jesus, before he lay here, declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life, whosoever believeth in me, shall never die." The bodies of his disciples moulder away, the sinful body is destroyed, but a glorious body shall rise from this very grave.

When the christian receives, himself, the summons, the messenger is not alone. The angel accompanies him, and says, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." He then sees, that "death is swallowed up in victory." He is not afraid to descend into the grave. He has endeavoured to follow his master, during life, and he knows, that in death, he will not desert him.

. In the anxieties, vexations, disappointments, and all the varied sorrows of this life, the angel says, "Come, see where the Lord lay." Look and see what Christ suffered, and how he bore

all that was laid upon him, and then let us think, how little, and how light, all our afflictions in this life are. The christian should bury all sorrow in the sepulchre, and look up to heaven, whence shall descend comfort and consolation.

To those busy with the cares and pursuits of the world, too busy to think of eternity; to those revelling in its pleasures, too intoxicated to think of heaven, the angel says, "Come, see where the Lord lay." Step aside, for one short hour, and look where he who was pierced for you, lay. Remember that the time is at hand, when these cares, and these pleasures, shall be no more, and when it shall be found, that the only source of safety, and of peace, must be in Jesus, who lay here.

In the hour of temptation, yield not, but obey the voice of the angel. See the effect of sin. Think on the agony of him who lay in the tomb. Turn not away from that tomb of the Lord, to transgress his law, and show your ingratitude. Look down, and see the place where your Lord lay, and then say if you can deliberately break his command.

If, under the influence of anger, hatred, envy, discontent, or any other evil passion, look into the tomb, and see where the meek and lowly

Jesus lay, and then pray for deliverance from them.

In every inducement to break a positive command, in every enticement to indulge in a dubious pleasure, amidst the vanities and frivolities of the world, in the neglect of duty, in every act of life, in weakness of faith, in coldness of love, in forgetfulness of God, under attachment to the world, and heedlessness of eternity, listen to the angel. Look daily, and hourly, into the sepulchre, for there the Lord lay, that he might, through death, destroy him that had the power of death, and manifest to man, the truth of God, when he said, the soul that sinneth it shall die.

FRAGMENT LIII.—THE ASCENSION.

“TOUCH me not.” This has been generally understood, as meaning, delay me not, neither delay thyself, for I am still to be here, for some time, but go, immediately, to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God. In this view, the practical lesson is, that feelings, and the expression of affection, however laudable, are not to supersede, or interfere with, the performance of a direct duty. But may there not be another explanation? There is a reason given: “*for* I am not yet ascended to my Father.” All the disciples clung to the hope of a temporal kingdom, a restoration of the freedom of Israel. Even, at the very moment preceding the ascension, they seem to have been indulging in the same expectation. Mary was delighted to see her Lord again, and may have, now, been satisfied, as to his continuance on earth, and the manifestation of his power, in favour of his people. But she was to be undeceived, and a reason was given for not indulging in any feeling of affection con-

nected with his temporal residence. "For I have not yet ascended." I am not to remain. The same intimation, is sent to his disciples, in words of tenderness, "Go to my brethren." How kind the expression "my brethren," and how endearing the words, "my Father and your Father, my God, and your God." Here is a rich, a kind, a tender message. The work of redemption was finished, death was abolished, but, Jesus had not, yet, ascended, to procure for his people, the inestimable gift of the Holy Spirit. He had done all, on earth, for us miserable sinners. He was, now, to ascend to his Father, to plead our cause, to be our friend, protector, and mediator. Being made one with him, his Father is our Father his God our God, his kingdom our kingdom, his fulness our fulness, his acceptance our acceptance, his joy our joy, his control over soul and body, over life and death, over things in heaven, and things on earth, is to be exerted in our behalf, and for our eternal benefit. His disciples loved their Lord, and would have desired his abode with them. Mary rejoiced in his return. But his ascension was necessary, and the intimation was given in words of love. He had formerly said unto them, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."

We know not what is good for us, and in all things, ought to rest assured, that God doth well, and wisely. Jesus did not remain, to reign on earth, but he did what was much better for his people. He continues to reign in their hearts, by his Spirit, and to reign, for them, in the kingdom of glory. "Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe, thy only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens, so we may, also, in heart and mind, thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth, with thee, and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end, Amen."—*Collect for the Ascension day.*

FRAGMENT LIV.—WE ARE NOT SAVED.

It has, with too much truth, been said, that no man intends to do, all that he can do, in perfecting the christian character. I do not assert, that a vague, undefined, inoperative intention, to conform to the law of God, does not exist. But, it is notorious, that when that law is placed before us, in all its strictness and purity, though, there may be an admission of the duty of compliance, there may be no efficient effort made, for performance. It appears too strict. Some relaxation may be allowed, or desired. Some breach permitted, though not approved of. Some deviation from the straight path, whilst conscience says, that our path is not the right path. The most careful christian cannot excuse himself, or say, that this charge, in no degree, applies to him. He dare not maintain, that in every instance, and at all times, he honestly, and faithfully, intended to obey. He may not, exactly have to admit, that he deliberately intended, and resolved to disobey. That is a different thing. But, there is a negative conduct, concerned in yielding, which

if examined, will in reality be found, arising from weak, or deficient, intention. Whatever name may be given to this, there is no active and determined purpose to obey. Connected with this, is weak resistance. No man can say, that he resists temptation, as resolutely as he could do; that he banishes evil thoughts, and subdues evil passions, and desires, with all the power and determination, and watchfulness that he could put forth or employ. It does not alter the case, whether we talk of man's own efforts, or those aided by the Spirit, for, he must work with the Spirit, if he expect to be preserved by the Spirit. This is a melancholy picture of the best of men, and calls for deep humiliation, active vigilance, and strenuous endeavour. But, if this be, too much, the state of the christian, what is that of the unconcerned. They, still less, can say, that they sincerely and perpetually intend to serve God, and receive his salvation, or strive, with watchful vigour, to resist every temptation and banish every sinful thought. It is deplorable, that whilst this is true, such conduct is not felt to be the everlasting peril of the soul. Speculatively, it may be admitted, perhaps with a sigh, and with a project of reformation. But repentance, and reformation, and prayer, and entreaty, are put off, till another day.

What is this, but a proof, that the intention is not active, the resistance not irresistible. Some, may read this page, and acknowledge that this is their state, and yet may procrastinate. It is this procrastination, which is the ruin of the soul. Reader, do you really intend to devote yourself to God, to come faithfully to Christ, to resist temptation, and perform duty. Of all duties, and all claims, the most essential is to accept of offered mercy, for neglect of this, is the head and front of your offending. Do you intend wilfully, for it must be by your will to delay till a more convenient season. Do you honestly, intend to renounce, and that at once, the maxims and ways of the world, and enrol yourself, as a pilgrim for heaven. Delay is the work of an enemy. Now is the time, and, if that time be neglected, if the present feeling be allowed to die away, who can tell if, after this, and former warnings, and importunities, it may not be said, "Let him alone he is joined to idols." Hear the word of God, "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee." "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness." Few perish, in a christian land, from a positive intention to reject Christ. But alas! how many do so, from insensibility to the immediate danger; the desire for a little longer time in vanity fair, a

hope that life is to be long, an apathy to the gospel, and to that eternity, to which the gospel relates. Listen, perhaps for the last time, to the expostulation of him, who is slighted by you. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." If this touch not the heart, and subdue not the will, you must at last say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

FRAGMENT LV.—DEAD TO SIN.

WE can look with indifference on, and form an impartial estimate of, those things in which we have no concern. Not so, when our desires and affections are engaged. We are then blinded, or deceived, and why? Because we form not a correct judgment, and yield to our feelings and imaginations. It is thus, that at various periods of life, we vary in the objects we pursue. We are captivated now, with what we presently shun, or despise. It is, or ought to be, the endeavour of every wise man, to be freed from all inclination toward whatever is worthless, or injurious, and to aspire to what is truly, and permanently, valuable. These reflections are suggested by the advice of St. Paul, "Reckon ye also yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He would urge on the living, that they ought to be dead to the evil in, and of, the world. That being one with Christ, they should have "the old man crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." That they were buried with him in baptism, and

raised with him to a new life. He would urge that "if we have been planted, together with him, in the likeness of his death, we shall be, also, in the likeness of his resurrection." Alas! who passes through life as a glorified spirit would do, were he to revisit this world? and yet this we are called to do. Our shortcoming is not commended. Our failure is not approved of, though we be forgiven in Christ. Our coldness, our wanderings, are pardoned, on account of the great sacrifice. We ought, indeed, to die completely to sin, to die with Christ, but we still live to the world. It is of his infinite compassion that we, notwithstanding, are made partakers of his life. He, by his Spirit, regenerates, and renews, and sustains, and guides. But he, at the same time, says to his people, ye are strangers and pilgrims, follow me, and look not to the enticements of a world lying in wickedness. With these, and with its undue cares, and vain pursuits, we ought to have nothing to do. Were we truly dead with Christ, we should not even see them, nor know that they existed. There should be no trial, or temptation, or desire to sin. But we are not yet dead to sin, nor to the world. We never shall be so, till we leave this life, and then shall we look on all its vanities, cares, and pleasures, as the full grown man does, on the

toys and trifles, that he valued in the nursery. I am wrong, he will regard them even less. No expression can convey a stronger meaning, than that of being dead to sin, and to the world. Sin, and the things of this world, exist, but have no more influence, than on a lifeless body. The dead are insensible to every thing around, the light no longer affects the eye, nor music the ear. To them, it is, as if they existed not. Even so, could one be as dead to 'sin here, as he shall be in heaven, it could have no power over him. He should not feel its influence, and, to him, the baneful enticements of the world, should be as harmless, as to the body in the grave.

But, with this deadness to sin, there is also, on the other hand, an active principle. The soul is alive to God. Whilst there is this mighty destruction of sin, and indifference to the vanities of time, there is, also, a life of holiness, an animating love to God, a being "alive unto God." Like Enoch, he should walk with God, and have his citizenship in heaven. This death and this life, cannot be complete here, but we are not, therefore, absolved from the duty of aspiring after these states, nor warranted to relax our endeavours. Prayer and perseverance, are means which have the pro-

mise of a blessing, and, of advancement to christian perfection.

For a time, a man may be engaged in one purpose, and follow keenly, and without interruption, one pursuit, to the utter and complete exclusion of all others. Give his mind a new direction, and all that had hitherto absorbed him, is abandoned and forgotten. He is, now, as intent on the new, as he had been on the former object. Even so is it, in the case before us. Old things have passed away. Earth yields to heaven. Time to eternity. The soul is dead to sin, but alive to God, and to God alone.

FRAGMENT LVI.—THE END OF ALL THINGS, AND
REST IN HEAVEN.

“SEEING then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?” This, may be considered as the summing up of the matter, by the apostle, and well merits the attention of all. A life of religion, is the only prelude to a happy death. It is an awful truth, that the few years of time are to determine boundless eternity. The Bible, by the Spirit of God, enables us to form a true estimate of this world, and to use it as a passage to the next. We, truly, are only strangers and pilgrims here, and should set our affections on things above, at the same time that we endeavour, faithfully, to do all that is required of us on earth, and to fulfil the purposes of God in our station. We must look on this world, as the traveller does on the road, which leads him home. The christian pilgrim, has cares and troubles in his journey, but religion soothes and heals them, and hallows every comfort. Life or death, he believes to be in the hand of

God. The time of arrival at his Father's house is fixed, and, with serenity, perhaps joy, he looks to his entering into the everlasting rest. But who can conceive, far less describe, the ravishing joys of that rest. There, is the ineffable glory of God, which we can only compare to splendour and light, beyond all human idea. But this glory is not merely the brightness of God, but is connected with a perception of his infinite holiness. Here, we may, in a small degree, admire, and love purity; but there, the holy soul, can feel the exquisite delight of beholding, and loving, infinite purity and perfection. And this feeling must be heightened, by a perception of that mercy, which was displayed in a state of sin. The soul beholds Jesus who saved us, to whom it looks for all its past preservation, and present happiness. How different the conception and feeling, now, and on earth. Now, there is perfect, ardent, adoring love, and a rejoicing in the glory of Christ, which cannot be felt here. We may form some faint notion of one ground of rejoicing, when we think how much we are gratified here, and pleased when a beloved wife, husband, parent, or child, is esteemed, admired, and honoured. In heaven, we see our best friend, our only Saviour, highly exalted

and adored. Our delight is in beholding his glory. We join in the praises of the heavenly host ; for, this Saviour loved us, and gave himself for us. We feel that all our praise and adoration are too little. The work of Christ is not confined to this life, to the redemption of man, and his elevation to heaven. He continually performs a work there, as he did here, whilst the world lasted. He reigns over his saints, and is continually, through eternity, bestowing blessings, and happiness, and glory, on each individual ; and each of his servants looks to him, as the giver of every good and perfect gift, in that abode of the redeemed. On earth, we cannot love the Redeemer as we ought, neither can we conceive his love to us ; but in heaven, the soul is capable of loving, and of knowing more of the love of Christ. If this be the happiness of heaven, that could not be a happy place, to a soul, not altogether holy. But there, we also see the Holy Spirit, whose operations, influence, and support, have been given to us here, and whose glory is equal to that of the Father, and the Son. The blessed Trinity is praised in heaven, and ever are there, new and increasing views of the glory and perfections of the Godhead. There, also, we are, and associate with the holy angels, who are the min-

isters of God's pleasure. There, are the saints from Adam downward. Those whom we have read of, we now see, and, with them, adore the mercy which saved both them and us. There, are those blessed spirits, we had parted from, and long mourned. We now meet in bliss, to part no more. There is no more sin. It is destroyed, and not known in heaven, except by remembrance. There is no sorrow, no disappointment, no envying, or grieving, no unkind feeling, no fear of separation. In heaven, there is one uniform, unalterable love, to one another, and to God. What new acquaintance may be formed, what steps of progress, what varied views, the different portions of eternity may be connected with, we cannot tell. But hark! amidst this praise, and joy, and blessedness, to us unconceivable, the trumpet sounds. Sounds not in terror, but as a summons to the saints and angels, to attend their Lord in judgment, and to be reunited to the body, which has long lain in dust. The judgment is past, the end of time has come, a new heavens and a new earth appear, and the glorified body dwells, for ever, happy, by the sanctified spirit, which inhabits it.

“O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect, in one communion and fellowship,

in the mystical body of thy Son, our Lord: Grant us grace, so to follow thy blessed saints, in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

Collect for all Saints day.



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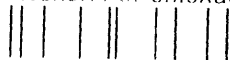
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